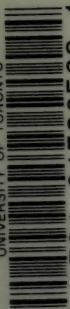


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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VIGNETTES FROM INDIAN WARS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE ARMIES OF INDIA

PIKE AND CARRONADE

A FREELANCE IN KASHMIR (A ROMANCE)

THE OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE WAR (EGYPT AND PALESTINE)

AFGHANISTAN FROM DARIUS TO AMANULLAH

BEHIND THE SCENES IN MANY WARS

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS: THE NORTHERN HURRICANE

THE KING'S PAWNS

THE INDIAN MUTINY IN PERSPECTIVE

THE RELIGIONS AND HIDDEN CULTS OF INDIA

THE ROMANCE OF THE INDIAN FRONTIERS

THE ARMY—LIFE AND WORK SERIES

THE MARTIAL RACES OF INDIA





THE MASTER GUNNER



# VIGNETTES FROM INDIAN WARS

BY

LIEUT.-GENERAL

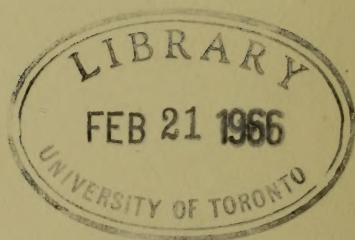
SIR GEORGE MACMUNN

K.C.B., K.C.S.I., D.S.O., P.S.C.

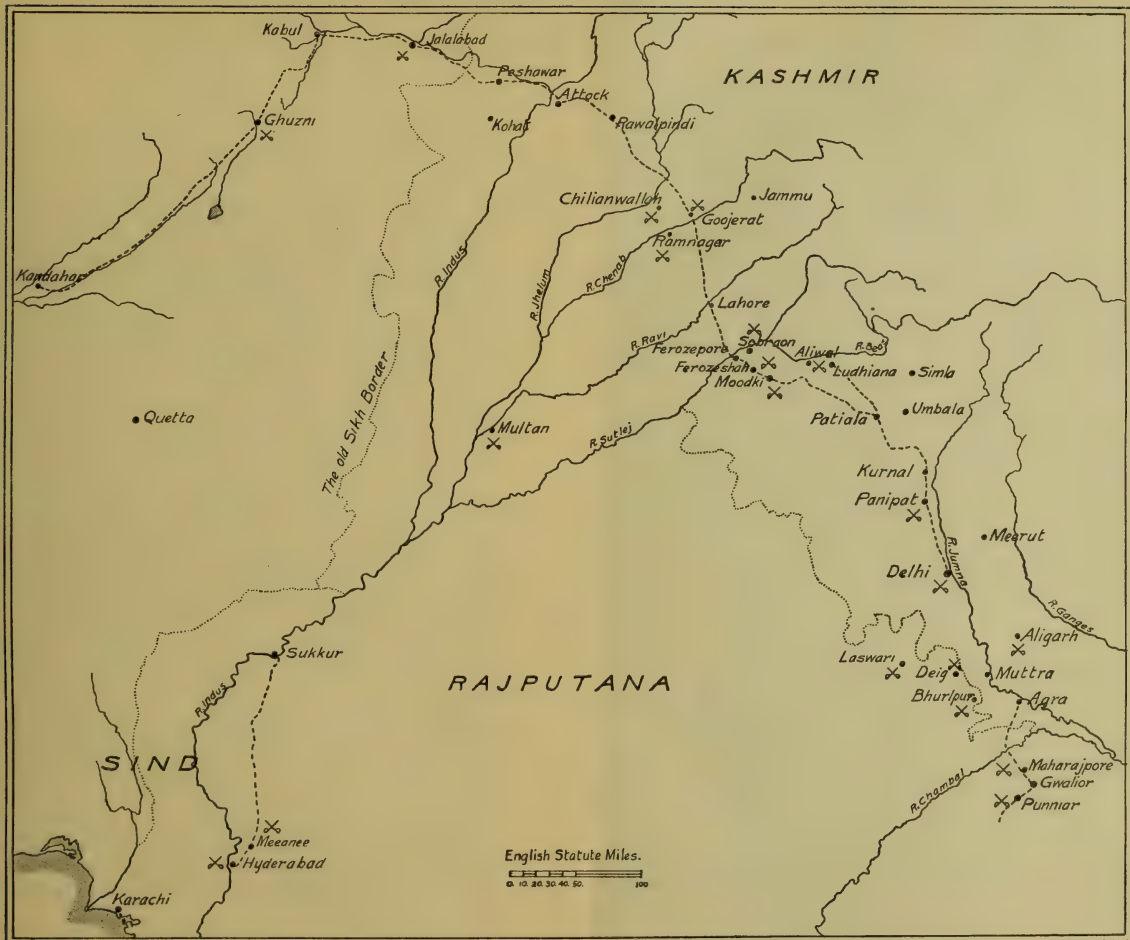
*(Colonel Commandant The Royal Artillery)*

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SKETCH MAP OF NORTHERN INDIA TO ILLUSTRATE THE CAMPAIGNS OF LORD LAKE, LORD GOUGH AND SIR CHARLES NAPIER



## INTRODUCTION

WARS must pass into perspective and drift behind the mists of time, and loss and remembrance must have been softened, before their story and their romance can be enjoyed. The many smaller wars which accompanied the Great War will grow in romance and interest as the years roll by, to which their Eastern setting will lend more colour. But though no war like the last and no side-campaigns on so great a scale have occurred before, yet this Island kingdom, this "Swan's nest in a pool" has more than once poured forth its armies from homestead and manor and city. In the Napoleonic wars, the British army was flung to the four quarters of the world, and the East even then added its glamour to the story, while our Eastern Empire and dependencies owe much of their increase to the impetus which the hostility of the French engendered.

The strange fate which took us to India and made us heirs-at-law to the crumbling Turkish Empire, which men call the Mogul, has caused us to evolve that great Indian Army which British officers have eagerly led . . . those officers whom Indians have eagerly followed from the China Wall to the Flanders flats. Long even before the days of Napoleon, the British and French crossed bayonets in India, and long after St. Helena, when Europe was enjoying its forty years of peace, the British were struggling with the forces of disruption which the dying away of the Mogul had loosed, and the intrigues and endeavours of the French had stimulated.

The more recent story of the British Indian Army is well enough known, but the earlier story, or perhaps it might more correctly be termed the middle story of that Great Line dressed and drilled on the British model, which began to rise about the

time of the French Revolution, first on the Dettingen pattern and later in the spirit of the Peninsula army, is a sealed book to many of the present generation.

Yet it was against this Indian Army, with its British core, that the huge Mahratta and Sikh armies broke in vain, till a large part of it came to a sudden end in that mad tragedy which men call the great Indian Mutiny. That fate, however, overtook the Army of Bengal only, and those of Madras and Bombay slipped away into the armies of to-day without the strange purge which spent out the larger force.

The story of the Line of John Company, dressed in scarlet so that it should the better impress the armies of the Native States by its likeness to the actual Line of Britain, is full of romance, the romance of war mingled with the romance of the Mogul Empire and its remnants. The romance, too, runs far past it into the mists of time when Alexander fought with Porus on the banks of the Jhelum close to that other battlefield of Chillianwallah, through the ages to the day when the last Mogul puppet, an aged pantaloon, staked the fortunes of the remnant of his house on the mad throw of the dice which the Bengal Army threw and lost.

It is especially interesting now when the last of the four great Turkish Empires which divided the rule of Asia has fallen—the alien Kajar Dynasty of Persia—to realize that the first emperor to go, he of Delhi, was maintained in pensioned decrepitude by the British, after rescue by Lord Lake, blind and miserable, from the hands of his Mahratta captors. These four Turkish and Tartar dynasties have fallen in the following order, first the Moguls of Delhi, then in the present days the Manchu Empire of China, the House of Othman at Constantinople, and now the Turkish Kajar Dynasty of Persia—“and none so poor as do them reverence.”

The vignettes shown in these pages are focussed to give some colour and romance to the dry bones of story, and to reclothe them from the sidelights which remain for those who care to look for them, as well as from the impressions to be found by

roaming over the ground and climbing among deserted fortresses and ruined cantonments. To strike the broken strings to melody, I have commenced the series with the life story of a veritable eyewitness, an ancient elephant which had passed from the service of the British to that of the Maharajah Sindiah, expanded from a curious occurrence at Delhi at the time of Lord Curzon's durbar. The actual series I have opened with the story of the disastrous battle of Panipat in 1761, the battle fought hard by "the Black Mango Tree," which stood so long on the plain. Here it was Afghan and Mahratta who fought for the custody of the abject Mogul Emperor and his magic sign manual, and after the battle the evil news swept through India in the cryptic message explained in the story. Then follow some incidents of Lord Lake's campaigns, with the rescue of the now blinded Emperor from Mahratta hands and the two sieges of Bhurtpur. In Victorian times the story of "The Illustrious Garrison," the Defence of Jalalabad during the first Afghan War, the Battle of Maharajpore when Lord Gough smashed the Mahratta armies for the last time, and some vignettes of the two Sikh Wars, bring the tale up to the Great Mutiny and the coming of the present era. Of the Mutiny, the drama of its coming to the ancient Mogul capital, is the most striking of all, and to it have been added two side stories which show something of the life of the time.





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# VIGNETTES FROM INDIAN WARS

## I

### A CYCLE OF CATHAY

(As seen by Captain Foresight)

*Ghore par howdah, hathi par zeen  
Jaldi chagya Warren Hasteen.<sup>1</sup>*

(*Old Indian Lullaby.*)

As the evening gun flashed and reverberated over the huge durbar camp at Mogul Delhi, studded with twinkling lights and merry camp-fires, I, James Foresight, a simple captain of artillery in general and of a heavy battery in particular, stepped out of the gunner mess-tent into the cool moonlight, loosened my jacket, and, weary of dessert and mess chatter, leant against a howitzer in the battery gun-park.

The spirit of reverie that haunts an Indian evening descended on me, and there in the durbar camp, within a rifle-shot of "the Ridge," a thousand thoughts crowded on each other, of ancient India, of Prince Gautama and Alexander of Macedon, of Timurlang and the mighty Babar, and then of the India of "John Company," down to my own poor wanderings, while the band from the Viceroy's pavilion sounded clear across the camps, even as the strains of mutineer bands, playing British airs to the imperial puppet, must have reached "the masters" as they clung to that ridge close on half a century ago.

The moonlight glinted from the four long khaki barrels of the heavy guns, and their howitzer satellites, no longer drawn

<sup>1</sup> *Howdah on horse, elephant with saddle  
Thus hastily fled great Warren Hastings.*

by giant elephants, but confided to the lumbering "twenty yoke of the 40-pounder train."

From time immemorial the heavy guns, called in some shrewd jest the "true politicals" of India, had been drawn by elephants, and only their ammunition-waggons by bullocks; and now, by a recent edict, elephants had been discarded—discarded at any rate till a 40-pounder next jams in the Khaiber. So, down by the gun-park I dreamed of the past pomp of my battery, now dimmed by the loss of our famous elephants, and mused on, on the varying phases of a soldier's life in India; of my subaltern service with the mountain artillery, lightest of the dogs of war yet hardly least; of my first sojourn with elephants in Burma, when we hoisted our 7-pounders on their backs to thread the Pinmana jungles. Then on to years spent with the jingling gun-mule all the frontier round, wandering on to stories of Clive and Cornwallis, of Lake and Wellesley, and of the romance of Indian soldiering, that, descending through Donald Stewart and Roberts, still lingers on the Afghan marches, with

"The flying bullet down the pass,  
That whistles shrill, 'All flesh is grass',"

where my best friend lies, shot through the heart as he breasted a kotal at the head of his battery.

"Salaam, sahib," broke on my dreams, the salute of a muffled figure that had approached from the bullock-lines. It was none other than my old friend Sheikh Bhulloo, for some time jemadar of mahouts in my battery, now chief of the *hathi-khana* (elephant-stable) of Sindiah, in whose retinue he had come with the State elephants to the durbar, and had hastened to greet us the first spare moment he had had. He had been with our artillery elephants at Pinmana, and I had met him again in charge of the beasts carrying commissariat grain-bags to our posts on the Yunan frontier. In those days a bottle of chlorodyne and a tin of Swiss milk had enabled me to cure the old

man of what he firmly believed to be cholera, so he was proportionately grateful, and delighted beyond measure at meeting me at Delhi, and finding me the captain of his former heavy battery. He had returned the chlorodyne favour by curing me of ague in those same frontiers by giving me some of his pet opium pills, and as ague had been threatening me for the last two nights, I felt inclined to ask for a pill now.

“Well, Sheikh Bhulloo, how goes the *hathi-khana*?”

“By the favour of the Presence, all is well. To-night is old Seevaji’s festival; he is the oldest elephant in Hindostan, and has been with Sindiah since the Great Fear; men say he carried Carnwallis sahib, and even the Horrible Istink<sup>1</sup> sahib. Gopi Nath has just repainted his head, and three *chirags* [oil-lamps] burn on his skull-top; will not the Presence come and see him. Shisha Nag, who used to be head elephant in No. 4 gun in the Huzoor’s battery, is with him, and as the prince-born knows, Shisha Nag drew Lord Lake’s guns when the Huzoors first came to Delhi; but Seevaji is older than he.”

“Of course I’ll come and see Seevaji, and old Shisha Nag too; but wait till I get my cloak, for I’ve had ague these two nights.” When I returned with my cape I found the old man examining the new breech-loading howitzers with intense interest: cannon have always fascinated the Asiatic.

“The Presence has ague! he must have *āfeem*” (opium), said Sheikh Bhulloo, and I was at once presented with an opium pill of considerable size.

“It won’t hurt the Presence,” said the old mahout anxiously, and so, not without a qualm, I swallowed it, and followed him towards Sindiah’s camp.

The chiefs’ camp lay far through the maze of army camps; past the native cavalry, row after row of hobbled squadrons and forests of lances and pennons; past the horse and field artillery, every gun-muzzle in scrupulous dressing; past the squat vixen screw-guns of the mountain batteries; through

<sup>1</sup> The Honourable Mr. Hastings.

street on street of close-packed battalions, British and native; past camp-fires and cheery sing-songs—

“ Jolly good song, jolly well sung,  
Jolly good comrades every one ”——

till we came to the meddled establishments of the native chiefs. Slipping past the spreading tents and *shamianas* of the potentates, we came to their cavalry camps and gun-park, differing scarcely at all from a gathering of Mogul feudatories of perhaps a couple of centuries ago, since in the immutable East a century is but a span.

In the *rajwara* gun-park there was little of the sombre order obtaining in the Sirkar's camp a mile or so away. Big guns and little guns, silver and even gilt, dragon-mouthed and ostentatious, lay in delightful medley. Field-guns that Scotch Sangster had cast at Agra for De Boigne's French-trained contingent a century ago, silver coehorns on rosewood carriages from Indore, rakish swivel-guns, bell-mouthed *zumbooraks*, long-barrelled *sher butchas* from mountain fortresses, every fantastic piece of ordnance that oriental ingenuity could devise, stood cheek by jowl on the nitre flats by the Jumna, while beyond them loomed two huge elephants, and some fifty yards farther on a dozen more. By this time my *āfeem* pill had allayed the incipient chattering of the ague, and was producing a feeling altogether novel,—so much so, that when finally settled on the trail of a huge lumbering bombard, within a dozen yards or so of Seevaji and Shisha Nag, I felt hardly surprised at the weird effect of the lighted *chirags* flickering on the former's crown, or the elaborate painting on his forehead that showed up fitfully as the wicks flared and sank again.

“That's Seevaji, the world-compeller, the mover of mountains,” whispered my guide. “See his tusks, mounted with gold; Sindiah had that done when Seevaji charged through his own mutinous troops at the time of the Terror, and enabled him to escape to the British, so that he preserved his honour

and his fidelity. Forty-five years ago to-day, and his Highness always gives *bukhsheesh* to the *hathi-khana* and decorates Seevaji, the *Amir-i-filan* [Prince of elephants], lest he turn on us and kill his mahout: seven mahouts has he killed in my memory, Huzoor, and what he has seen and what he knows no man can tell. See the garlands of roses the Maharajah sent him this morning; he will only wear them if his temper is good."

Weird indeed, uncanny and unearthly, loomed that mountain of flesh and bone, the wrinkles in brow and trunk forming a rugged silhouette in the full fragrant moonlight that the white nitre efflorescence on the ground reflected with the brilliance of an arc-lamp. A couple of yards behind stood my old friend Shisha Nag, the erstwhile leader of four gun, a contemporary of Gerald Lake, of Delhi and Laswari,—“Lucky Lake” men called him, for all the hazards he took and won,—an elephant old and venerable to mere human ideas, but a child beside Seevaji, whose close ally he now was.

Both the leviathans were weaving steadily after the manner of their kind from one leg to another—a movement which conveyed the impression of deep reverie and contemplative reflection, and which would go on solemnly for hours at a stretch.

“*Khudawand*, Seevaji will soon begin to talk,” whispered the jemadar mahout. “We never know what he will say, but he tells of battles and sieges, of suttees and sacrifices, of wholesale bow-stringings in the *bibi ghar*——”

“Come, come, Sheikh Bhulloo, don’t talk rot,” I began; but—was it rot? was it so absurd that an animal living to twice, and perhaps thrice, threescore years and ten, with a brain and wisdom more approaching man’s than does any other animal’s, should acquire in the course of years the thoughts and speech of its owners? Absurd or not, it began to seem to me, leaning against that medieval cannon, that it would be the most natural thing in the world for that elephant, with its ceaseless rhythmic weaving, to reveal some of the impressions that those small

and cunning eyes had recorded on its brain, and I continued to gaze expectant on the two leviathans, while the *chirags* flickered and leapt.

I had not long to wait. "Oho, Shisha Nag! oho! What has the Sirkar done with the gun-elephants? Never before have I seen the big English guns drawn by bullocks alone."

I could not at first discover from which beast the voice came, a hollow voice wavering with age, but it was evidently Seevaji speaking; and he spoke remarkably good Persian, which I understood, though now and again he broke into Mahratti which was harder to follow.

"The Sirkar prefers bullocks, O Seevaji! Dirty, grain-fed bullocks, that sleep all day, and can't pull the weight when the ghats are muddy; ay, and has bred a new horse too, all hair and bone, thinking they will make the 40-pounders gallop and trot like Lake sahib's galloper guns. To think that I, who shoved General Malcolm sahib's siege-trains through the Vindhyn Mountains ere Asirghar had fallen, should live to see it, *Aré bap-ré!*" rumbled from Shisha Nag, our old gun-leader, in less quavering tones.

"Bullocks!" wheezed old Seevaji. "Bullocks! did a bullock ever do aught but die when the work was hard? Ask General Abercrombie about it! I well remember, but it is so long ago that all other elephants are dead, the trouble the English had; I then belonged to Suckojee Rao Endulkar, who commanded a Mahratta *panch-hāzāree*<sup>1</sup> in Sindiah's service: the Rao himself rode me, and my trappings were finer than the great Lord sahib's this day.

"We marched south to help the *Angrez* [English]; Carnwallis sahib, the *Angrez lāt*, had beaten Tippu, and those misgotten Mysore *log*, and would have pressed to Seringapatam, but all his bullocks died, died like locusts in the cold, and he had to wait for the Bhow, who was bringing many elephants from Poona. Well I remember the talk about it, and the *Brinjara*<sup>2</sup> folk said the *Angrez* over-marched their bullocks;

<sup>1</sup> A corps of 5,000 horse.

<sup>2</sup> A tribe of hereditary carriers.



but we elephants knew better—we knew that when bullocks draw guns, elephants will sooner or later have to do it for them.

“Abercrombie sahib at that time was marching from Bombay and the Konkan, and his bullocks died too, so we all waited near Bangalore. Why does not the Sirkar find out what *Lāt Carnwallis* sahib said about bullocks after that?

“Some English troops from Bombay came with the Bhow. Captain Little sahib commanded; he was a great friend with my Rao, and they would go shooting tigers on my back. Those were fine times, Shisha Nag, fine times; hundreds of banners were carried with the Bhow’s army,—each Mahratta chief had his own. We had 40-pounders in those days also, cast by a Portuguese in the Peshwa’s fort at Poona. I often had to go shove them out of their mud, for their wheels were of solid teak and sank deep.

“The Angrez army was a fine sight too, men called it the Grand Army. Carnwallis sahib rode a white Arab, and the flag of the English was carried behind him on an elephant; that was before your time, Shisha Nag. We then marched into the mountains to Nundy Droog—the Bhow and some of the Grand Army—and took it after twenty-two days, and the Bhow’s Rohilla companies killed the *killedar* [governor] and threw half his Arab garrison headlong from the cliffs of the Droog, 600 feet in the sheer, where they fell on the prickly-pear bushes, and lie there still, for aught I know, to this day, which much pleased *Lāt Carnwallis* sahib. I trampled the *killedar* under my feet, and many another, as we went through the gate, which was full of Tippu’s dead Arabs. I was not afraid of men’s blood in those days, though I can’t face a slaughtered goat now.

“In the spring we returned to see *Lāt Carnwallis* storm Seringapatam, after which the Rao always feared the English, though why Tippu was not put to death we never could understand, nor why he was allowed to keep his fortress till he again became rebellious, so that General Harris and Arthur Wellesley sahib *bahadur*, had to kill him six rains later. I was there also.

“Next hot weather we returned to Poona, where Nana Furnavis ruled the Peshwa for the good of the land, and sent us off to fight the Nizam’s army, never heeding the British Resident, who forbade it. The Nizam had 14,000 men, but we beat them, and cut the throats of all our prisoners save M. Perron and fourteen *Feringhi* [French] soldiers, who worked the artillery. I drew the Rao’s brass 18-pounder that morning, the one with the devil mouth that stands yonder even to-day.

“We captured M. Perron’s camp and all his chief’s women; there was a Feringhi maid too, whom the Rao claimed as his share. He carried her off in a howdah on my back that night, though she wept bitterly. The Rao put his arm round her and she bit him till he bled, so that he swore again, but vowed she was fit wife for a reiving Mahratta, and so she was. I took them across the Nerbudda, in full spate from the mango showers, when he sent her west in a litter, and what came of her I never heard: belike she was the mother of the two boys who carried his standards at Kirkee, and were killed by the English artillery; men said their mother was of Europe.

“I saw nine Feringhi gunners who would not leave their cannon brought prisoners to camp that morning and given to the Arab company, who made targets of them, for the Angrez and the Feringhi were of no account in the Deccan in those days. The Rao had already forgotten Carnwallis sahib and his ‘Grand Army,’ though I remembered well enough.” And here old Seevaji grunted disgust at the folly of his dead and gone masters, as well he might, for their tether was to be short enough.

The little lamps on the leviathan’s skull flickered and danced to the tales of battle and murder, while I, seated on that devil-mouthed gun from M. Perron’s park, was strangely unsurprised to hear old-world stories from the wrinkled mammoth. Not so, however, Sheikh Bhulloo, who cowered and prayed to Hindu gods his fathers had long forsworn.

“Sahib, surely he is a *bhūt* [ghost]: much blood has he seen, and knows all the evil that Mahratta and M’lech wrought a

hundred years ago—nine full-sized cakes shall he have for breakfast, with best molasses atop—*ohé*, best beloved!”

The *chirags* flared once again with a frosty blue flame, and this living record, weaving through the smoke of the wood-fires, his bead-eyes ever twinkling, continued to croon out his history:—

“After that the Rao marched through the Canara jungles back to Poona, levying a tax of 500 rupees and five maids on every village we passed, and if any man resisted we roasted his legs, so that he denied us nothing. One moneylender there was who swore he had not a penny; he was too fat to roast, so an Afghan captain of horse offered to deal with him. They put centipedes in his ears and nostrils, and plugged them in with cow-dung, and then locked him in a coffer with burrowing stag-beetles. In half an hour he promised two lacs, which so pleased the Rao that he gave the Afghan the banker’s two daughters and 5,000 rupees besides, vowing it was a pretty jest. That was how we kept the peasantry in order before the English broke the Mahratta barons and Pindari chiefs, or young Englishmen could ride about the country in their shirt-sleeves giving orders to whom they please.

“When we arrived at Poona Holkar wanted to put the Rao’s *panch-hāzāree* under a Feringhi officer; but the Rao refused, and marched west again for his own land, vowing vengeance against upstart bastard princes. Then we came to the Ghats above Bombay, where we captured the inner and outer forts of Raj-Machee from one Jeswunt Rao, *patel* of Junair, and thence raided cattle and girls from the Konkan for three years more, close to where men tell me the fire-carriage now climbs the Western Ghats by Khandalla. Once an English force attacked our fort, but we drove them back, the Rao pouring molten lead on the party of soldiers who tried to blow in the outer gate.

“Three white wounded soldiers were left, whom we impaled on the elephant spikes of the big teakwood gates as a warning to let us be. I pressed with my forehead on each till the spikes pierced them, for my mahout urged me with the sharp of his *ankus*; for which pain I tore his outcaste head off later.

“Next year we raided down to the rich green Konkan till the Angrez fired at us across the water from the old Portuguese forts on the island of Salsette. There was a Portuguese sahib with us, who cast the Rao’s cannon, who danced and swore to see it. Ho-ho, a merry life we lived in Raj-Machee, gradually capturing the hill-forts round—Visaghur with the Jain temple, Torna, Toonga, and Lohoghur, where lay the long gun from the sea, that belonged to the old English queen, with a rose and an English letter cast on its breach.

“When the Peshwa sent to us for tribute we flung his wakil, a Mahratta Brahmin, over the Ramoosie bastion of Torna, 700 feet below to the rocks and the cactus-hedge, that all men might know that the Rao fought for his own hand. His horse took toll of every caravan, and the Salsette fishers sent him three maids a-year, the price of their bamboo villages. At that time there were fifty Arab horsemen in the Rao’s service, who had deserted from the Nizam, and who, having grown proud from much loot and licence, vowed they would ride north and seek new adventures in Khandeish, which they did, taking the Rao’s pet 3-pounder gun with them, and four of his own Arab horses, hoping to cross the Mutha before they were missed. But the river was in spate, and the Mahratta horse from all the Rao’s forts caught them at the ford, and brought them back in irons before him, sitting in durbar in the upper fort of Raj-Machee, overlooking the courtyard. With him sat his chief officers drinking sherbet, and as the prisoners were brought in he scowled on them and spat, saying, ‘Poke their eyes out, and cast them loose outside the gates,’ which was done then and there, while he further ordered their families to be cast lots for among their captors, so that men said the Rao was just and merciful.”

Here that horror-proof beast strained at his lashings and scattered dust and hay-stalks on his back with his trunk, while across the camp reverberated the rolling drum and squealing fife, ordering all troops to bed, till shrill and clear through the tents rang the cavalry trumpets sounding the Last Post, dying

away and re-echoing amid the mist of the river to the minarets beyond. In the tense crisp silence succeeding the trumpet-call Seevaji recommenced his saga:—

“’Twas about that time, Shisha Nag, that Holkar beat Sindiah and the Peshwa outside Poona, on the Ahmednagar road. The Peshwa fled through the hills to Bassein, and the Rao sent me with two brass guns as a present to Holkar, offering service. Poona was overrun by Holkar’s men, and Bapu Furnavis was skinned alive, till he told ere he died where the Peshwa’s silver guns were hidden.

“Much talk there was at this time of driving the English into the sea, and how the Feringhi<sup>1</sup> emperor in Europe would send guns and ships to assist. Sindiah and Holkar were to be friends, and all the Mahrattas would act together, and the English rule would be swept from the land; but I, who had seen the army of Carnwallis sahib, knew better. Before the Mahrattas had thought of moving, up over the Ghats came Wellesley sahib, *bahadur*, and Stevenson sahib, with guns and English soldiers and lacs of sepoy. They stormed the big fort at Ahmednagar, and we with Sindiah were beaten at Assaye.

“I was captured there by an English regiment that wore slashed red-coats and long white hair. Those Angrez came over the Kaitna ford before we knew they were there, though all our guns spat canister. The red-coats charged our guns as we tried to get them away; two Feringhi gunners who tried to hook me to mine were bayoneted, while a tumbril behind me blew up, killing two gun-elephants, and the rest bolted, upsetting our regiment of sepoy that D’Auvergne sahib had trained in the Feringhi fashion; but I did not bolt, for I knew the English.

“Wellesley sahib then came up without his horse, and called to my mahout to make me kneel, which I did, the general and two other officers getting up. He was cursing because his

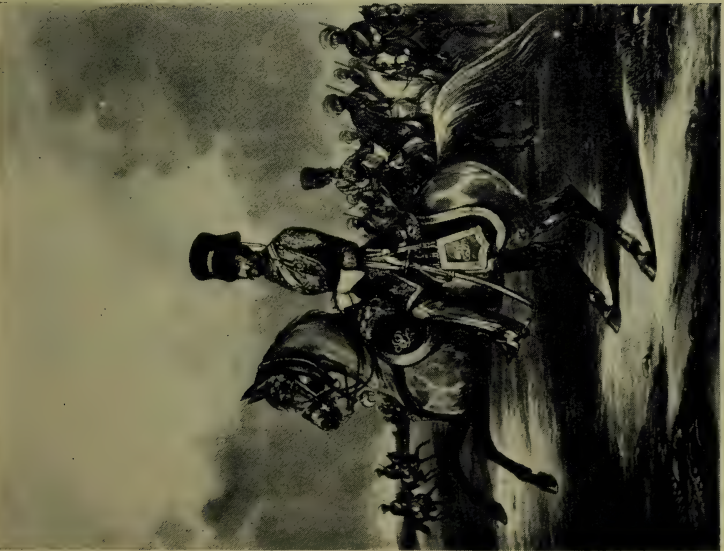
<sup>1</sup> Seevaji used *Feringhi* meaning “Frank” for French and *Angrez* for English.

Arab had broken away from his orderly and had galloped after our elephants. One of the English officers held a pistol to my *mahout's* head, bidding him follow the English dragoons, so I hurried all I could. We stopped by an English sepoy regiment that had ceased firing and begun to carry away its dead and wounded. The colonel came up, and the general hissed something at him, so that he shouted to his men and hit a native officer over the head, when the regiment then doubled after us, and all the Mahratta army fled or was captured.

“So I entered the English service and ate their sugar-cane for many a long year, but shall never forget Wellesley sahib that day, and how the English colonels were afraid of him.

“Back I came to Poona, perhaps twelve years later, when Bajee Rao had forgotten Wellesley sahib. There was a battle at Kirkee, and I helped the English bullocks drag their guns through the Sangam marsh. Bajee Rao fled with the Nana Dundoo Punt, the cowherd's son. They hid in the cave temple near Bamburda, where men say the old priest who urged the Nana to kill the English at Cawnpore still lives to this day. They also say, though I believe it not, that the English knew he was there but would not take him. Men say, too, the English are changed since those days. *Lāt* Carnwallis sahib would not have liked that, even though he did spare Tippu. 'Twas not long ago that three Mahratta Brahmins came to Gwalior, who said that that Bamburda priest was alive, and had planned the murder of the English commissioner who brought the great sickness five years ago; but who knows? for all Mahrattas lie, even as they lied to Arthur Wellesley sahib.

“But who had seen the like of the English in those days, O Shisha Nag? It was soon after that, when they had brought Burman bells from Rangoon to cast more siege-guns, and also twenty-seven Mingoan elephants from Ava to draw them, that *Lāt* Combermere, *bahadur*, the new war-*lāt*, marched against Bhurtpur with an army as big as Carnwallis sahib's in the old days. All Hindustan believed the English could not take the fortress, since Lake sahib failed twenty years before; but I,



OFFICER OF THE BUNDELCUND LEGION: A TYPICAL  
CONTINGENT



BENGAL INFANTRY: THE SEPOY OF THE MUTINY





who had carried Carnwallis sahib and Arthur Wellesley too, knew better.

“Because men told him that I had carried those two Rustums, Combermere sahib must fain ride me also, and close under the Bhurtpur walls we rode, while Colonel Skinner’s *rissalah* marched close behind, with all the elephants in the Purab drawing big guns: perhaps you were there too, Shisha Nag?

“Outside Bhurtpur was the Begum Samru, who had come all the way from Sardhana to help the white English, for the sake of her dead lover, with 500 *gorcheras* [irregular cavalry] and three brass *zumbooraks*. *Lāt* Combermere got down from my back to receive her, kissing her before all the army, after the English fashion, as Lake sahib had done before him, till the young sahibs laughed again, though why the *Lāt* sahib should kiss a shrivelled old woman beats my comprehension, since even her brass guns were honeycombed and not worth having. Two days later one hundred cannon opened against the town.

“Years after, when the Sirkar had given me to Sindiah, and he in the Terror had lent me to the English, and I helped bring the siege-guns to Delhi with Jan Nikalseyn, I heard the cannon during the last days on the Ridge; but there was nothing like those at Bhurtpur, not even when the English sacked Lucknow. That was the last time I heard a gun fired in anger, and the Sirkar gave me back to Sindiah when fortress Gwalior was restored to him. So now I live in peace, Shisha Nag; but it’s dull enough, for there’s never a fight and rarely a rape, year in, year out: it’s years since I’ve seen the English cannon till to-day, though now I’ve seen more white soldiers than ever marched with Carnwallis sahib and his Grand Army; but why they don’t use elephants to draw their guns I know not, and perhaps am too old to care. That jemadar mahout who lights these foolish *chirags* sees me well fed, lest I tear him limb from limb, as I served the last who stole my sugar; and that’s all I now care about,—for I’m old, Shisha Nag, and weak, and have waited a hundred years and more for *Lāt* Carnwallis sahib,

*bahadur-i-bahaduran*, to need me once again." And here that weird beast trumpeted shrilly, and the line of elephants in rear seemed to move in the dust and the smoke of the fires, while mingled with them came horse and foot, Tippu and Bajee Rao, with their trains of artillery, Lord Cornwallis himself on old Seevaji, in tie-wig and Kevenheuller hat, Arthur Wellesley on the missing Arab, spare and trim, De Boigne and Perron, with their French batteries, Colonel Skinner in his canary regimentals, swarthy and eager, the Begum Samru beside him, Pathan and Rohilla, Mahratta and Pindari, Moplah and Vilayati in one ghostly panorama, with myself in gunner mess-kit, astride the devil gun, harnessed in the procession, till—I awoke in my own Kabul tent in the grey Indian dawn, still in uniform, my imperturbable *khidmatgar* standing at my side with my tea, while glancing furtively through the opening of the tent, his opium-box suggestively in his hand, stood old Sheikh Bhulloo, whom I had last seen covering by that devil gun, as a century of Indian history filed before us.

## II

### THE BLACK MANGO TREE

(The Last Battle of Panipat, 1761)

“Two pearls have been dissolved, twenty-seven gold mohurs have been lost, and of the silver and copper the total cannot be cast up.”—*A Despatch from the Battle of Panipat.*

### THE RISE OF MAHARASTHRA

THOSE who are brought into contact with the inner aspirations of the idealist section of the anti-British movement in India know well how Sivaji, the Mahratta prince, is held up as hero and saint and model to the militant Hindu. In the days of the Mogul Emperor Alungir, whom men usually speak of by his personal name of Aurungzebe, in the days when the restored Stuart dynasty sat again on the throne of England, the distant provinces and feudatories of the Empire were in constant revolution. The emperor had abandoned the catholic tolerance of his forefathers, and everywhere the Crescent was taking its toll of Hinduism, so that the twice-born had been driven to fury and bitter despair. The Mahrattas, those mountain people of the Western Ghats, had long been a thorn in the Mogul side. They were a mixed people with a large Brahmin colony among them, and a numerous military class who, while claiming Rajput origin, had no doubt considerable aboriginal ancestry. As a power they consisted of a more or less varying federation of States and chiefs, whose object was to live on their neighbours. It was not till Sivaji, the son of a Mahratta captain, born in 1627, forced himself to the head of the federation, that any-

thing analogous to a national and patriotic sentiment arose among them. The persecutions of Aurungzebe had prepared the Hindu races for a war of religious freedom. Under Sivaji a Hindu State was formed which gradually gained control of Western India. Sivaji, then, and ever since, has figured as the champion of religious freedom and power temporal to the Hindu races. It was for Sivaji, the "mountain rat," to throw off Muhammadan dominion in Western India and produce an era when the Hindu might worship his gods and daub his trees and corner stones, free of persecution. The Mahrattas in earlier times had fought with Islam for prize and for love of strife, but under Sivaji they fought as men fight for a cause. So it is little wonder that the "mountain rat," as the Mussalman contemptuously called him and his followers, is now the patron saint of Pan-Hinduism.

How Sivaji and his successors fought the Moguls and destroyed their empire, and how they formed a great military power, that watered its horses in the Ganges and the Indus, is a long story. Suffice it to say that by the middle of the eighteenth century the Mahratta confederacy had passed into the real control of the Peshwa, the hereditary minister to the descendants of royal Sivaji.

The downfall of this great military confederacy, which held all India to ransom, did not, as some would believe, have its origin when the East India Company became a military power. Formidable an opponent as the English found it, its might was shaken once and for all by Ahmed Shah the Durani in the year 1761, at the world-famous battle of Panipat hard by the Black Mango Tree. With the apotheosis of Sivaji at the present day, and of Dundoo Punt the Nana, the adopted son of the last of the Peshwas, it is as well to remember where first the Mahrattas received the blow that probably changed much of modern Indian history. To follow this we must trace the decline of Mogul Empire from the death of Alungir to the last flicker that once and for all died away before the thin red line on the Ridge at Delhi.

It is also well that we, when inclining our liberal ears to the demand of Pan-Hinduism, should remember in its outline the hopeless state of destitution and internecine war from which we rescued India. The break-up of the great Muhammadan Empire, and the wars of the barons that followed thereon, had during the several generations that elapsed before the coming of the English, reduced the country to a state far worse than ever Tilly and Wallenstein had produced in the Palatinate.

In 1707 died Aurungzebe, the Emperor Alumgir (the holder of the world), the last of the real Great Moguls, in the fiftieth year of his reign and the ninetieth year of his age. He was succeeded for a few years by his elderly son, who, under the title of Shah Alum ruled as the Moguls used to rule, but dying in three years left the empire to ruin. In so vast an empire as that of the Moguls only a firm central authority could keep the great governors and nobles in order. With the death of Shah Alum the throne fell into the hands of various king-making factions. Four puppet emperors followed in quick succession, each in his turn falling by a miserable death to the violence of the warring factions. Then a son of Bahadur Shah's was placed on the throne as Muhammad Shah, and succeeded in retaining a nominal authority in the hands of his Wazirs for eight-and-twenty years. In the Asiatic form of chess, the piece that we know as the queen is called the *Wazir*. The idea of the puppet king, and the powerful hand behind the throne, so well exemplified in the failing years of the Mogul Empire, is typical of the fate of all the empires of the East, and explains to us the anomaly in the form of the game as we know it.

During this reign the power of the Mahrattas under Bajee Rao I the great Peshwa, was yearly increasing, and their insolent claim to levy *chouth*, or one-fourth of the revenue from all lands, was actually sanctioned in certain cases by Imperial firman. It was the purpose of the Mahrattas to enforce this right over Hindustan proper, over Bengal and over the Dekhan also, by sheer force of arms and insolence, and to live at ease in their own fastnesses on the proceeds.

During the reign of Muhammad Shah on the peacock throne, came in 1738 the overwhelming invasion of Nadir Shah, the Persian Turk, with half the clansmen of Central Asia in his train. On the road to Delhi, he met and defeated the Imperial army, whereon the Emperor surrendered, was well received, and accompanied the invader to Delhi, where Nadir announced the money ransom he expected. A report getting about that Nadir had died, the Mogul troops turned on his followers in Delhi, and Nadir, enraged at this, ordered a general massacre. This continued for days, and was followed by an eight weeks' plunder, of which the people of Delhi speak to this day.

The sack over, Nadir Shah reinstated the Emperor Muhammad Shah, annexed the Afghan provinces, with Sind and Multan, and returned to Persia with his booty, which has been put by varying authorities at from six to thirty millions sterling, but was probably less than the lower figure.

With the departure of Nadir Shah began again the struggles of the barons, under a central authority which had lost all power and prestige and wealth. India had several large Afghan colonies of ancient date, continually reinforced by fresh drafts from the hardy races of the North. The struggles were between the "Lords of Iran," viz. the Persian nobles, the "Lords of Turan," viz. those of Turkoman or Turanian origin, and the Afghans of Ghilzai, Lodi, and Abdali descent.

Shortly before the death of Muhammad Shah, a fresh danger threatened his authority in the shape of Ahmed Shah the Abdali, who, having possessed himself of Nadir Shah's treasure on the death of that monarch, had founded the Durani Empire at Kabul and now aspired to be a prince and a ruler in Muhammadan India. The Abdali, or the *Ben-i-Israel* as they call themselves, claim descent from one Kish or Kais, said to be eighteenth in descent from Saul, King of Israel, and had now assumed the name of Durani in place of Abdali by order of their leader Ahmed. This was all happening about the time of the last Stuart rising in England and Scotland—that is to say, is almost within reach of a link of two or three lives and

their memories. In 1748 Muhammad Shah was gathered to his fathers and succeeded by Ahmed Shah his son, and by this time Ahmed Shah Durani had made the Mogul governor of Lahore swear allegiance to him and not to the Mogul.

On several previous occasions the Mahrattas had been called in by one or other of the warring Mogul factions, and Bajž Rao had conceived the idea of becoming Emperor of all India, and supplanting Islam. Soon after the accession of the new Emperor at Delhi they were called in to assist him subdue the rebellious Afghan colony in Rohilkund. In 1754, however, one of the Rohillas had deposed the new Emperor, creating another prince of the blood Emperor in his stead, with the world-compelling title that Aurungzebe dead fifty years had assumed, viz. Alungir II. To Delhi then came Dattajee and Mahdajee Sindiah with Holkar, Mahrattas all, to recover the Punjab for the Delhi throne. Here we may see for the moment some guiding policy through the clouds of intrigue and civil war. The Mahrattas were for the Indian Empire, quite apart from who should control it, and to be rid of the Afghans was their first object. To Ahmed Shah Durani the maintenance of the faith was the object at heart, with no doubt some advantage for Ahmed Shah as well. His object was to restore the rule of Islam under a Mogul Emperor at Delhi, with the Punjab, however, a province of his own Empire of Kabul. No doubt he would remain the overlord and protector of Islam in India, with the Afghan colonists to watch his interests. Here it may be remarked that the King of Kabul of to-day bids fair to stand before the world as the patron of orthodox Islam. The Turk is no more a power, and the Khalifa at *Rum*<sup>1</sup> is no longer a mainspring to the believer. The present occupant of the Durani throne is the only independent ruler in Islam.

However, be that as it may, down from the North came Ahmed Shah Durani in 1759, to drive the Mahrattas before him, and restore for the moment the fortunes of Alungir II. Before, however, the Shah and his Afghans could secure the person

<sup>1</sup> i.e. The Sultan at Constantinople.

of the Emperor, the latter had perished miserably at the hands of his Rohilla Wazir. A puppet successor was set up but never acknowledged, and as the rightful heir was a refugee in Bengal, the throne of the Mogul stood a-begging. Had the Mahrattas beaten the Afghans, there is little doubt that Dattajee would have proclaimed the Peshwa's son Emperor of India. But Dattajee was killed, and the Mahrattas driven from the Punjab and Delhi with heavy loss. The news of their defeat stirred the whole nation to make an immense effort to carry out Bajee Rao's scheme of the "Mahratta over all." An immense army was formed, to which flocked the flower of the Mahratta chivalry with many a Hindu ally. The which brings us to the stage of history that was to close on the ominous field of the Black Mango Tree.

The Mahrattas of 1760 were very different in their organisation from the hordes of mountain rats that Sivaji had led from his mountain fastnesses. With the power and wealth that the federation had acquired they had also copied the system and pomp of the Mogul state. Their chiefs moved with all the circumstance that had characterised the Mogul. Their *Kazak* hordes had developed into large bodies of organised horse. They had masses of trained artillery and infantry, imbued with some portion of the French discipline that Lally had introduced in Southern India and Bussy in the Dekhan. It was a mighty moving army that moved north from the Dekhan to win an empire. Shuda-sheo Rao Bhao, a cousin of Balajee the then Peshwa, commanded the forces of the twice-born. With the enlarging of the Mahratta state the power and leadership had passed to some extent from the rough half-Rajput Mahratta of the hills to the fair handsome Brahmin clans, who could hold their own with Mogul manners and procedure. But what they had gained in wisdom they had lost in stubbornness.

With "The Bhao," as Shuda-sheo was always called, rode the flower of Maharasthra and all the appointments and luxurious fittings of the conquered Muhammadan powers of Southern



India. There was Mulhar Rao Holkar and all his lances, Mahdajee Rao Sindiah, illegitimate son of the reigning Sindiah, to become later the greatest of all Mahrattas save only Sivaji, Wiswas Rao, son of the Peshwa, Govind Panth of Bundelkand with his Bandelas, Suraj Mull the Jāt chief from Bhurtpur and many another Rajput and Māhrāṭṭa chieftain. With them marched also the mercenary corps of Ibrahim Khan Gardee, so called from having been commander of Bussy's French-trained bodyguard at Hyderabad. His corps consisted of 10,000 men trained after the manner of the French, with gunners and light field-batteries. Twenty thousand well-disciplined horse and the *Gardee* corps formed the *pièce de résistance* with the Grand Army, but thousands of light cavalry were also there. The great park of artillery was worthy of the Moguls themselves in their prime, heavy lumbering tiger-mouthed pieces drawn by long pairs of yoked bullocks, lighter pieces with short spans, field-guns after French models, light *sher batchas*<sup>1</sup> and hosts of *shuter-nals* or swivel-guns a-camel back. The Mahratta host numbered 55,000 horse, 15,000 disciplined foot, and 300 guns. With followers and all the evil entourage of oriental armies it numbered 300,000 souls that descended on the impoverished country like a flight of locusts, leaving starvation and misery among the wretched villages on its route.

First to Delhi came the Bhao, which, according to custom, was stripped of such wealth as Nadir Shah and Ahmed the Durani had left it. Yet so did Delhi and the seat of the throne attract wealth that it is said that the Mahrattas found seventeen lakhs to take away. Then, since the time was not yet ripe for declaring a Mahratta Empire, a prince of the blood, son of the rightful heir, was proclaimed Emperor and in his name the Bhao acted.

All the while that these hosts were assembling, Ahmed Shah the Durani lay at his Indian headquarters of Anupshahr on the upper Ganges organising the Afghan colonists and the forces of Islam generally. Early in the autumn he left his cantonment

<sup>1</sup> Lion's whelps.

and crossed the Jumna, and the Bhao moved out from Delhi to the field of Panipat, already the historic battlefield of Northern India, and entrenched the whole of his force round the town of that name. Marching up the Jumna to Panipat, the Mahrattas had drawn first blood by falling on an Afghan detachment, and a little later the Afghans drove a portion of the Hindus, who had moved afield, back into their entrenchment at Panipat with heavy loss. Then began that curious wait and watch to seize the better grip, after the manner of wrestlers, that is so characteristic of Asiatic warfare. It was the same in the pre-Napoleonic wars of the Continent. Two vast armies would sit and watch each other and wait an opportunity instead of making that same for itself, as did the Master.

#### THE DISASTROUS BATTLE

The accounts to hand of the battle itself are numerous and authentic. Grant Duff, the historian of the Mahrattas, himself knew several of them who had been there. The account given by Kashi Punt, one of the secretaries in the Afghan camp, is full of detail. As regards the appearance of the troops, those who saw the procession at His Majesty's state entry into Delhi in 1911 will have seen retainers armed and dressed as were the rival armies of Panipat. Some of the armour and weapons carried were no doubt the identical accoutrements worn there.

Now it has been already mentioned that what the Mahrattas of 1760 had acquired in the matter of pomp and appearance they had lost in the way of rough-and-tumble soldiering talent and guerrilla accomplishments. It is ever thus with the wilder folk. The regular Afghan army created by Shere Ali was ridden over by the British when it stood to them at Charasiab. A thousand Ghilzais on the mountain-side, each a law unto himself, were far more dangerous than five times that number of regular soldiers. The same applies to the Dutch in South Africa. The old veldt Dutch were a harder nut to crack than

your tame Dutchman with Krupp guns to hamper him. At any rate, the great moving columns of infantry and the lumbering yoke of the 40-pounder gun trains did not appeal to the older and wiser men as the system that had brought success to the Mahrattas in the past. It was the eternal harassing, the ceaseless sting and hover, that had made them so indefeasible to the heavier Mogul hosts. Suraj Mull the Jāt chief and Holkar himself had urged this on the Bhao, but the latter, enamoured of the borrowed trappings of the Mogul, had elected to continue on his ponderous way.

So for want of a desire to close, and disdainful of ancestral tactics, the Mahratta host sank into inertia in their entrenchments at Panipat. Out in front of the two armies champions met in single combat, and the soldiery looked on and cheered. But all the while the Rohilla horse usurped the traditional Mahratta functions, and cut off the mighty host of the latter from the resources of the country round, even as Holkar would have served them. At last it came about that waiting for the opportunity that they would not make, the Mahrattas found themselves at the end of two months with their supplies run dry.

We may here pause and look at this great standing camp. In the centre near the town, the huge embroidered tents and *shamianas* of the Bhao and his immediate following. Scattered round the considerable area occupied lay the tents and banners of the various great chiefs, the great *Bhagwan Jhanda*, the Hindu flag, wrapping its staff in front of the Bhao's camp. Close to the Bhao was the main park of artillery, big brass guns on lumbering teakwood carriages, with great heavy tumbrils alongside, behind the chiefs' camps the picket lines of their horsed retainers, whose green and red saddles would be lying behind their horses. The long lances would be piled in clumps behind the horses, while the troopers rested close to the rear picket pegs. The camp of the *Gardees* would present a more regular appearance with the arms piled after the French fashion, each commandant flying his camp colour. In every

backyard in the town and outlying hamlets would be crowded the henna-dyed horses of the irregular cavalry, and their baggage attendants, tethered with leather thongs, blue beads round their necks, and the print of a henna-dipped hand on the hind-quarters, ready to squeal and bite at the first opportunity. Behind the troops would be the long bazaars, for an Eastern army feeds itself from the booths of the camp sutlers, who follow an army at their will, and whose stocks were carried and replenished from the pack-bullock convoys of the Brinjaras—that race of hereditary carriers, with whom the wise Arthur Wellesley concluded a contract based on mutual confidence when he took the field against the Mahratta forty years later. Without this travelling carrier race admirably suited for carrying the requirements of the vast armies of the day, the long moves of troops and followers across the length and breadth of India would have been impossible. In the long bivouacked bazaars would be the meat sellers, the garin merchants, sweet-meat vendors, jewellers, parched grain and *kabab* sellers, tobacconists, spirit sellers, tinkers, fiddlers, dancing girls, Delilah in all her forms, mendicants, holy men, friars, and half the bad characters of the countryside, all kept within some semblance of order by the *Bazaar Choudri*.

If you would picture such a party leaving camp, you must go to the mouth of the Gomal Pass on the border of Waziristan in April, where, to this day, you will see the Ghilzai clans returning to Afghanistan for the summer, armed to the teeth and moving off in succession to tuck of drum under control of an official corresponding to the bazaar master of a Mogul or Mahratta *campo*. With them you will see their women and children, their grain sellers and their donkeys and pack bullocks, their camels and their followers crowding up the passes in controlled disorder.

It will be well imagined how such an army with such a following ate up the country-side, as it moved, and stripped bare the environment of a permanent halt, and how essential a free access for the Brinjara convoys would be. When the



AKBAR KHAN: THE SON OF DOST MUHAMMAD  
Our principal opponent in 1841-2



British clung to the ridge at Delhi, the whole country-side fed them. In the days of the break-up of the Mogul Empire no one would feed anybody except by force of arms, and there were no free markets in Panipat to which the villagers flocked with their produce. So it will be realised how this multitude soon came to its last supply of grain. For not only did the fighting troops and their horses eat their fill, but this moving town of shops meant 200,000 followers to the 100,000 combatants of all kinds. These followers included many of the families of the men, for half the country-side in those days lived a wandering life. Beside the camels and the bullock droves and the elephants would tramp the women of the *syces* and other menials with their children, *un qui marche, un qui tette, un qui vient!*—a strange mixture of peace and war, while the ladies of the leaders' families, and those who battled for their own hand, rode in little covered bullock-carts, peeping from between the crimson curtains, or swayed in the lacquered camel *khajawahs*.<sup>1</sup>

So it came about that the great expedition, to put an end to the rule of Islam and the Mussulman nobles, was in a bad plight, and by the middle of January the bazaar masters reported that there was no more food in camp at all. The Bhao, after a midnight council, sent a last appeal to some of the leaders in the opposite camp, whom he hoped yet might join him, and resolved to sally forth to fight for his life. It was in no spirit of conquest that the members of the Hindu confederacy mustered their soldiers on the morning of January 17, 1761. The last rations had been eaten at daybreak, and the troops formed with all the signs of despair, their faces smeared with ashes, their turbans dishevelled, and their hearts steeled for death but not for victory, which is a poor spirit to arm with, on a cold morning. We may perhaps here glean some glimpse of the future prospects for Pan-Hinduism as a world-power. At any rate all accounts agree as to the mental state of the Mahrattas and their allies.

<sup>1</sup> Panniers.

Their muster consisted of perhaps 30,000 good troops and 200 guns of all sorts. Formed in a line of masses, with the left thrown forward, they emerged from their entrenchments and moved towards the Afghans. Ibrahim Khan and his *Gardee* corps, with their guns, formed this leading left. In the centre was the Bhao with his own troops, and the cavalry of Sindia and Holkar were on the right.

Ahmed Shah, a man of surprising activity and alertness, had been on the watch all night and had just lain down, when the Mahratta advance was reported. A short reconnaissance showed that the alarm was true enough, and he at once marshalled his hosts. His main forces consisted of some 28,000 Afghan horsemen on heavy Turkoman horses (heavy, that is, compared with the Mahratta garron) wearing mail, and a similar number of Rohilla horse—that is to say, Afghan colonists of Hindustan, from Rohilkhund and other similar centres. His foot soldiery consisted of some 38,000 Hindustani infantry, matchlock-men and pikes, with a total of 80 guns. The Rohillas faced Holkar and Sindiah and also held part of the centre next to a mass of Afghan cavalry. Two brigades of Persian cavalry faced the *Gardees* and a large body of Afghans were in reserve on each flank. The Mahrattas came on with a murmur of *Hur Huree*, *Hur Huree*, rising to their war-cry of *Hur Hur Mahadeo!*—the Afghans waiting to receive their attack. At first the disciplined array of Ibrahim Khan drove asunder the Persian ranks and rent a Rohilla corps, so that 3,000 are said to have been slain by them in the first attack, and the courage and temper of the Hindus rose and the masses joined contact on all sides. The great *Bhagwan Jhanda* swayed and moved forward, as the loud cries of *Hur Hur Mahadeo* showed that the twice-born were a-top the crest of battle. Mass after mass of Afghans thundered into the fray, and the great guns seemed to be firing on friend and foe alike. ‘*Allah Ho Akhbar! Din Din! Fatteh Muhammad!*’<sup>1</sup> yelled the men of Islam, and strove to get at the great Hindu banner by the Black Mango Tree, as the Normans strove

<sup>1</sup> “God is Almighty! The Faith! The Faith! Victory to Muhammad!”



for the Standard of England by the Hoar Apple-tree on Telham Down and Saintlache.

Then, after varying fortune for three furious hours, Ahmed Shah, with an eye trained to *Grand'guerre*, loosed his great reserve divisions of heavy Afghan horse, to ride through and through the lighter cavalry of Hindustan and the Dekhan. For three hours had the *Gardee* corps on the Mahratta left carried all before them, but within an hour of the launch of the Afghan reserves, the whole of the Hindu confederacy was broken beyond recovery. Here and there knots of the *Gardees* held their own in squares and clumps, but for the most part the field was nothing but a slaughter of the flying, and prisoners, and of men too broken even to fight for life. Fierce in the battle, the Afghan spared none in his hour of victory; man, woman, and child, priest and leader, spearman and water-carrier, were overwhelmed in one vast holocaust.

Grant Duff records that 200,000 soldiers and followers from the hosts of the Bhao were slain. The Bhao, committing his family to the care of Holkar, had turned his *Dekhani* charger and galloped from the field, to die unknown, till his headless trunk was found later. Wiswas Rao, the Peshwa's nephew, was slain, Jankojee Sindiah was taken captive and slain next day; Mahdajee Sindiah escaped sore wounded, after a long ride with the Afghans close behind. The gallant Ibrahim Gardee fell into the enemy's hands wounded and was put to death, and lesser chiefs innumerable shared the same fate. Never had the Mahrattas and their allies fallen into such a disaster; the flower of every clan perished with their chiefs, and mourning was spread into every family of note and every mountain village of the Western Ghats.

Away on the banks of the Nerbudda the Peshwa, who had heard of the leaguer of Panipat, was pushing north with reinforcements, when to him came a *co ssid* (a mounted messenger) from a banker who had accompanied the army of the Bhao. And the message he bore ran 'Two pearls have been dissolved,

twenty-seven gold mohurs have been lost, and of the silver and copper the total cannot be cast up.'

Soon followed the scattered fugitives, and grief and despair took possession of the Peshwa's army. Sadly he broke up his camp and fell back on Poona, to die of a broken heart in the following year. It was the news of Flodden Field over again. From every upland homestead, and from every bastioned village in the Dekhan and Malwa, the youth of Maharasthra had joined the squadrons of the Bhao. From the sun-scorched hills of Rajasthan to the green slopes and woods of the Western Ghats arose the sound of mourning. Blessed are the twice-born who burn on the pyre, but lost for ever were the hundred thousand souls whose bodies lay headless on the field of Panipat, unburied and unburnt.

Kashi Punt relates that of the followers the younger women and children were carried off by the victors, and that tens of thousands of male prisoners, fighting-men and followers, were formed into lines, given parched grain and some water, and then beheaded for the glory of God and His prophet. During the long years of his life, in which he was to become so famous Mahdajee Sindiah would ever imagine that he heard the hammer of the hoofs and the broken panting of his Afghan pursuer's horse. For miles had Sindiah been pursued by 'Lutf Ullah Populzai, a swinefed reiver of the North.' The escape of Sindiah, with all the colour of the battle is splendidly portrayed in Mr. Rudyard Kipling's 'With Scindiah to Delhi'; especially is the supposed treachery of Mulhar Rao Holkar dwelt on, who men say failed to bring his 30,000 horses into the fray with any effect, in spite of constant and imploring messages from the Bhao.

'Ho Anand Rao Nimbulkar ride! Get aid of Mulhar Rao.'

But Holkar's horse were flying and our chiefest chiefs were cold,  
And life a flame among us leapt the long lean Northern knife.

Such was the third and the last great battle of Panipat, when the sons of the Prophet fought the twice-born for dominion

in Hindustan which was to pass from either. Under the guiding hand and wise statecraft of Mahdajee Sindiah, the Mahratta was again to come to great power, but always under the nominal rule of the Great Mogul, whom they held as puppet, till Generals Arthur Wellesley and Gerald Lake brought the house of cards to the ground at Assaye and Laswari, more than forty years after the stricken field of Panipat. During those forty years the Mahrattas and the English were ever quarrelling, and though the English brought them low, the great blow to their supremacy was struck when the flower of their chivalry lay dead on the plains by the Black Mango Tree at the hands of Ahmed Shah the Durani.

How Sindiah 'the *Patel*' came to be the power behind the throne for so many years, and to hold all the threads of peace and war and policy in his wise hands, is a story too long to be told as a sequel to the tragedy at Panipat. Or how he and De Boigne, the Savoyard, formed an army that none in Hindustan, saving always the English, could face, and which so long as Sindiah lived was never allowed to clash with these same English—that too is a story in itself. When Sindiah died, the ship of state, as he had conceived it, went crashing on the rocks, and no one had *nous* enough to steer it off. The new Sindiah, the Peshwa, Holkar the Bonsla, all the great chiefs of the confederacy bit the dust in succession, and their French-trained armies fell, as De Boigne always knew they must, before the red-coat sepoy of the English and their hard-bitten European soldiery. The poor old puppet of Delhi, blind Shah Alum, became a British pensioner, and the Mogul was never again to form a nominal rallying-point for the princes of India save only for the instinct of the Imperial tradition which brought the mutinous soldiery of '57 once again to the rose-red palace at Delhi for a few months of dreams and madness. And behind the English in this matter of the Mahrattas we may ever see the ghost of Ahmed Shah the Durani Emperor of Kabul.

As the sound of his northern pursuer's horse rang ever in Sindiah's memory, so for many generations the fear of the

invading North lay on India; and now that India forgets, and murmurs ever at an alien's yoke, be it never so benevolent, it is well that this same India should remember that this same North still stands, hungry and fierce and poor, waiting for the day when the British frontier guard like the Legions on Hadrian's wall shall mount for the last time, and once again leave bare the road to the Bikaner and the wealth of Hindustan. The frontier hills still dream of it as Sir Alfred Lyall makes the old Pindari dream.

'My father was an Afghan and came from Kandahar,  
He rode with Nawab Amir Khan in the old Mahratta War;  
From the Dekhan to the Himalay five hundred of our clan,  
They asked no leave of prince or chief as they swept through  
Hindustan.'

### III

## LORD LAKE'S CAMPAIGNS

### I. THE BATTLE OF DELHI, 1803

*The opening of the nineteenth century brings India to the time when the British perforce came to succeed to the Turkish overlordship of India, by way of astounding drama.*

THERE is an old medal, inscribed "to the Army of India"—so old that the youngest soldier to receive it must have attended his last muster, many a year past—which, among many clasps earned under Lake and Arthur Wellesley, Ouchterlony, David Baird, and Combermere, bears two that tell a tale long forgotten by most men—viz.—"Battle of Delhi," and "Defence of Delhi."

Over a hundred years ago, when Richard Colley Wellesley, Lord Mornington, and later the Marquis Wellesley, was Governor-General in India, and his two brothers in the land with him, the Mahrattas were a power in the land so great that the same conclusion had forced itself on his mind, as had dawned on the chiefs of that confederacy. There could not be two kings in Brentford, and British and Mahrattas could not share Hindustan with each other, one would have to be master. Tippu Sultan and Hyder Ali's legacy of power had been broken for ever, and now only the Mahratta peril remained. Chief of the confederacy as regards power, was Sindiah, with an enormous army trained on European lines, by the great De Boigne, aided by Perron and many a lesser French or Italian adventurer. This army was exceedingly well equipped and found, and armed with guns cast by Scotch Sangster at his foundry at Agra.

For years England had been at war with France, and the peace of Amiens was looked on as a temporary respite at best. Napoleon had cast envious eyes on India, had actually persuaded Russia to start an overland expedition against that country, had endeavoured to hold Egypt to make his move possible, and was even now said to be closeted with De Boigne, who had left Sindiah's service in 1798. French influence was very strong in the Mahratta Confederacy, Sindiah's army of regular soldiers consisting of 58 battalions and 400 guns, with 300 European officers, of whom 260 were foreigners, mostly French, while the armies of the other Mahratta chiefs were scarcely less formidable. The Doab, the country between the Ganges and the Jumna, had been assigned to De Boigne for the upkeep of his Frenchified army, and this district was known as "the French State." In 1798 Perron assumed command of Sindiah's army, in place of De Boigne, and moved up to take possession of this province, and collect its revenues, overcoming the resistance of local governors, and actually securing the person of the Great Mogul, the miserable blind Shah Alām, who still claimed titular authority in Hindustan, and in whose name Sindiah and Perron now issued edicts.

In 1803, the Governor-General decided that he would take the initiative in a conflict daily growing more imminent, resolving to deal a staggering blow to the Mahrattas, and to get possession of the person of the Mogul, to occupy Delhi and Agra and connect them with a chain of posts, to annex Bundelcund, and compel all states west of the Jumna to enter into alliance with the British, under his subsidiary system. Another equally important object, to which General Arthur Wellesley was to contribute in alliance with the Peshwa, after defeating Sindiah and the Bhonsla in the Dekhan, was, with the assistance of the Bombay Government, to cut off the Mahrattas from the sea, and all hope of further French assistance. Without going deeper into the politics of the hour, and Lord Mornington's aims and objects, it will suffice to say that in the Deccan, General Wellesley and Colonel Stephenson were preparing for their share, that

2,500 men were assembling at Allahabad to invade Bundelcund, while 10,500 men were collected at Cawnpore, under General Lake, to smash Perron at Delhi, and rescue the Mogul from French and Mahratta hands. The Great Mogul, the blind and wretched Shah Alām, grandson of Jehangir, and representative of the House of Timur, was as much a puppet in Mahratta hands, as was Bahadur Shah in ours before the Mutiny.

It was, therefore, in accordance with the above plans that General Gerald Lake found himself on the sultry morning of the 11th September, 1803, after a march of eighteen miles, on the banks of the river Hindun, and only six miles from Delhi; even as did, fifty-four years later, General Archdale Wilson, at the head of the Meerut Division, before striking the first real blow to show that the masters had not disappeared from the land.

General Lake's force consisted of 200 European artillerymen, three regiments of the King's dragoons, five native cavalry regiments, H.M.'s 76th foot, and eleven battalions of sepoy, by no means too grand a force for the purpose in hand, and one which already had had plenty to do *en route*, including the daring storm of the fortress of Aligarh.

Eighteen miles in September in Northern India is no light march, and it was a weary army that forded the Hindun river that morning in early autumn, H.M.'s 76th leading, in round felt hats like an elderly gentleman's bowler, with feathers curling round the crown, wearing scarlet jackets, white trousers, and high black splatterdashes, dusty and perspiring, yet ready enough to answer to the roll and squeal to the drums and fifes, that lifted them out of the river. Away to the north the rose-red towers of the Imperial palace and the white dome of the Jumna Musjid, shimmered amid the trees, in the midday haze, exactly as they did centuries before, as they did from the Meerut road to Archdale Wilson's Carbineers and Rifles, and as they will centuries hence—yesterday, to-day, and for ever—according to the law of the unchanging East.

While the army slowly swings over the river, the General and some of his staff have ridden on to the head of the camping

ground, and stand on a knoll by a *goojar*'s<sup>1</sup> hut, some six furlongs beyond the ford. Alone with young Carmichael Smith, his field engineer, in front of the party, stands the General, peering into the haze towards Delhi, anon tapping the ground thoughtfully with his gold-headed cane, one flap of his ample cocked hat turned down to shade his eyes, as our officers in South Africa cocked their felt-hats a hundred years later.

Below him the brigade-majors and camp adjutants were busy marking out the camp, while the army filed into bivouac, eager for shade and rest, since enemy there seemed none, and fighting was denied them. Straight for the front of the camp swung the 76th, their white smalls and gambadoes dripping river water, drums and fifes sounding high the defiant quick step, for all the world to hear. In column on either side the sepoy battalions, in scarlet coatees also, with short white drawers and bare brown legs, are forming up and piling their fusils. The Horse Artillery troop, only raised a year ago, rattles into camp from the flank it has been guarding, its bronze 3-pounders leaping to every stone and tussock, the gunners looking comfortable enough in their old English dragoon helmets. Out of the river bed, the lumbering bullock trains of the Foot Artillery creak and grunt, as they heave the heavy twelves through the sand. Behind, in clouds of dust, elephants and bullock hackeries struggle with the baggage of the army, in the descent to the ford, while refractory camels bubble, and sweating commissaries swear.

So also swore General Lake on his hillock near by, at the lack of information, from his spies and cavalry patrols, and the mental fog that enveloped the enemy's whereabouts and intentions. Perron, he knew, had resigned his command, and one Louis Berquien commanded in his stead the 17,000 regulars that composed his brigades. That these were round about Delhi the General knew, and also had expected to find them posted outside that city, so the absence of either enemy or information exasperated him greatly, the more so that the

<sup>1</sup> Grazier



waving second crops, and high pampas grass, hid from his view the plain between him and Delhi, and he visited his displeasure, as generals will, on some of his staff, who certainly ought to have found out something for him. It was naturally his D.A.Q.M.G. who was specially pitched into by his irate general, "if he heard nothing by noon, he would take out the cavalry and reconnoitre for himself, by George! and not be at the mercy of a d——d incompetent Staff, as he was at Castlebar, by gad!"

In the meanwhile, as the general swore and fingered his spy-glass, the infantry outposts were threading their way to the low ridge, half a mile north of the camp, hitherto held by dragoon vedettes. In the camp itself tents were rising, and camp fires kindling, over which the patient sepoy crouched crooning the old philosophic chant of the Army in India.

"Kābbi sūkh aur kābbi dūkh, " Sometimes pleasure and some-  
times pain,  
Angrez ka naukar." The servant of the English."

Everything pointed to a quiet afternoon for the tired army, and the General on the hillock, close shaven and red complexioned, his grey unpowdered hair *en queue*, unbuttoned his scarlet laced jacket, loosened his black silk neck scarf, as well he might on a September day in the plains, and thought kindly of lunch before starting his reconnaissance, as he turned to call his orderly and horse. Young Carmichael Smith at his side, already renowned for daring, resource, and every soldierly quality, had not ceased for an instant to peer into the haze, and suddenly shouted, "There they are, sir, by God! there they are!" pointing to the waving pampas grass in front. Hardly had he spoken when a white jet of smoke sprayed out from the pampas, and a round shot screamed shrill over the outposts, followed by the answering sputter of their muskets. The general is all afire at once, as he settles into his saddle, shouting orders to his staff to get the force under arms, and

send the cavalry to join him at the picquets, then canters off himself to reconnoitre, carrying off with him two belated squadrons of horse from the right flank, who have been watering in the Hindun below; up past the outposts now hastily entrenching themselves, the general pushes with his two native squadrons, and soon finds that a strong force is in front of him, probably M. Louis himself, and that nothing can be done till the rest of the cavalry arrive. An aide-de-camp is sent galloping back to hurry them up and order the whole force, save the picquets and one battalion of Sepoys left as camp guard, to move at once to the front.

Despite their march of eighteen miles, and the rising thermometer, fatigue has left the troops with the first round shot, belts, pouches, and scarlet jackets are hastily re-assumed, and within half an hour the Infantry in columns swing out to the front, and the twenty yoke of the artillery trains heave the heavy nines and twelves from the sand they have settled in. The cavalry, British dragoons and Rajput troopers, have already trotted away to join their fiery general—Lucky Lake, as they called him since the storming of Alighar—the galloper guns and Horse Artillery go bounding after them, as each team can be got ready.

No sooner does his cavalry arrive, than Lake pressed forward through the crops and waving grass, driving in the Mahratta light horse, who are scattered in it, to find, as he had expected, the whole of Louis Berquien's force, with guns untold, drawn up and entrenched, athwart the road to Delhi, not a mile from his own outposts, and with both flanks securely resting on marshy ground to boot! "Here was a pretty kettle of fish, by gad, thanks to those rascally dragoons, and their careless scouting; a pretty pass, for an army to be surprised at dinner time after years of active service!"

The fire that opened on the General's party was hot and heavy, and saddles were emptying apace, his own horse being killed under him, something had to be done, and that soon, no turning movement was possible, and even British bayonets

could hardly be flung straight at those guns. "The more we look, the less we shall like it," said Lake, with a chuckle, as he thought of a trick he'd played the French when a lad near Ticonderoga.

Lake had now got his cavalry some 600 yards from the enemy's guns half hidden by the crops, and heard that their right rested on the Jumna itself, so, as at this moment his D.A.Q.M.G. arrived to say that the Infantry were a short half-mile behind, he decided to send his cavalry forward in line of squadrons, with orders that directly the enemy fired, they should at once wheel about and retire as if in confusion, in the hope that the enemy would follow. The ruse had the desired effect. The impetuous Mahrattas believing that the British were flying, poured out in pursuit, even bringing on their guns—pressing forward they reached the edge of the pampas grass, only to see the apparently retiring dragoons, pass quietly through the intervals of scarlet clad columns of infantry a hundred yards ahead.

No time to reconsider a movement this, and before Louis Berquien and his chiefs could grasp the situation, the British were advancing at the double, with fixed bayonets, the General at their head, halting for a second to fire a volley when they saw the whites of their enemies' eyes, and then fair and square into the brown, sturdy Briton and stalwart Poorbiah, bayonet and tulwar, Brown Bess to match-lock and fusil, sabre twanging to locking ring, till the army of M. Louis broke with a wail of sorrow, and fled for the fords and bridges of the Jumna, or to the wide Doab stretching East and West, anywhere from those straight shooting muskets, pitiless sabres, and unpromising bayonets.

Tough old Lake in the thick of the charge, sees no need to further hulloa his infantry on, and disengages, that he may launch his cavalry, who are straining at the leash hard on the heels of the bayonet charge, and who at his word gallop after the broken Mahrattas. Of actual fighting there is little left to do, save where here and there a handful of Pathans, some

Rajput sirdars, or a band of Arab *Vilayaties*<sup>1</sup> sell their lives for sheer love of battle. Many of the Mahrattas were drowned in the Jumna, two battalions in reserve by the Delhi Ghat were dispersed, and a battery captured. All the artillery and all the impedimenta of Louis Berquien's army fell into our hands, camels, palanquins, *shamianahs*, bullock carts, tumbrils of powder, huge brass cannon on lumbering, solid wheels, cast in Sindiah's arsenal at Gwalior, dragon-mouthed pieces contributed by Baroda, and light handy field pieces from Scotch Sangster's Agra foundry. Sixty-eight pieces of cannon and two tumbrils of treasure were captured, and the Mahratta casualties are placed at 3,000, which however is probably exaggerated.

Following up his dragoons, Lake with his infantry columns breasted the low rise separating him from the Jumna, and found the roofs of the Imperial City, as a panorama through the haze, before him. He pitched his camp on the banks of the river, and from the 12th to the 17th his force was engaged in the crossing. On the 14th, General Louis Berquien, and four other French officers, surrendered to the Commander-in-Chief. On the 16th the latter visited Shah Alum the Mogul, whom he found in tattered state, surrounded by vast crowds assembled to witness his formal delivery from the French. The blind Emperor is said to have evinced much pleasure in his emancipation, which really, however, amounted to little more than a secured pension, and much empty ceremony. He showed his satisfaction, however, by conferring a sonorous Persian title, the second in his Empire, on the general.

From the 16th September, 1803, Delhi the Mogul capital became a British possession, and Lake, eager to be after Sindiah, established a small garrison there, and appointed Lieut.-Colonel David Ochterlony as Resident, before marching away to the capture of Agra, the crowning victory at Laswari, and his ever famous cavalry chases after Holkar through the Doab, finally

<sup>1</sup> Foreigners. The good word "Blighty" of the World War, derived from the British soldier in India using it for "Home."

running against such a wall at Bhurtpur, as even his hard head could not crack.

Such was the first battle of Delhi when the total British loss was 485, of which H.M. 76th regiment had, as usual, a large share, but hardly had Colonel Ochterlony and his garrison settled into their new quarters, than they were called on to fight for their lives against another of the Mahratta fraternity, and fight the Third Mahratta War. (p. 40.)

Jeswunt Rao Holkar, Maharajah of Indore, broke with the British for reasons many and various, and in July and August, 1804, succeeded in practically annihilating a force under Colonel Monson, then early in October, finding himself at Muttra face to face with an avenging army under Lake, resolved to steal a march on him. Directing his infantry and guns due north, he encamped with his cavalry within striking distance of Lake, played with him, and then whirled away after his infantry, with the intention of falling on the small garrison of Delhi, and obtaining the person of the Mogul. On the 8th of October Holkar's infantry arrived before Delhi, and at once opened a heavy cannonade on the city. David Ochterlony, the Resident, and Lieut.-Colonel Burn, the military commandant, had but half a battalion of Native Infantry and a small corps of irregular levies to hold the immense *enceinte*, the crumbling works of a Portuguese engineer, of the Imperial city. Every man was disposed along the walls, and now commenced one of the most stubborn defences in our annals, when a circumference of ten miles was held for nine days, against odds more than formidable to even an Anglo-Indian Army. On the 9th the enemy erected a breaching battery, and speedily began to batter a curtain about its defenders' ears, whereon 200 sepoy and 150 irregulars, under Lieutenant Rose, sallied forth, spiked those big guns, and wrecked the besiegers' battery. However, weight of metal was too much for the British, and by the 12th two more breaches had been made, and on the 14th, under a cannonade from every Mahratta piece, the enemy attacked in force, with grenade and scaling ladder, only to be hurled back

by the now wearied garrison. In the evening more guns were brought up, but disheartened by the repulse, and by the news of Lake's approach, Holkar disappeared in the night as rapidly as he had come.

From the 14th October, 1804, till the gathering cloud on the Meerut road, on that weird morning in May, 1857, the Imperial city of Delhi, with its slippered pantaloons of sonorous title and its pitiful mock court, intrigues and vice, was free of battle and alarms. The blowing up of the magazine, and the endurance on the Ridge, were worthy sequels to that stubborn defence of a century ago.

## II. LAKE'S PURSUIT OF HOLKAR<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps one of the most important, and certainly the most vigorous, of British cavalry campaigns on record is General Lake's pursuit of Holkar in the Third Mahratta War after the defence and relief of Delhi the next year (1804). Three regiments of H.M. Light Dragoons and three of Native Cavalry, under the personal leading of General Gerald Lake, then Commander-in-Chief in India, pursued that freebooting Mahratta and his celebrated horse day after day, covering 350 miles, of which the last stage was a twenty-one mile march, followed by a thirty-five mile night raid on Holkar's camp, and a further pursuit of twelve miles, making sixty-eight miles in twenty-six hours.

The episode is one worth remembering for the glory of the achievement as well as for the lessons to be learned, in which the old moral of "push" stands out from it, as it stands out in every war since the world began.

It is important, if we would get the perspective of this period right, that we should realise that there occurred at the beginning of the nineteenth century two entirely distinct Mahratta wars, in quick succession. The first was the Second Mahratta War, fought against Sindiah, of which the battle of Delhi just

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of the War in India*, by William Thorn, 25th Lt. Dns., 1818.

described was a notable incident. This war concluded in 1803 with a peace and treaty with Sindiah.

Hardly had the troops gone into summer quarters when Holkar, who had held aloof till his enemy, Sindiah, was defeated, must needs commence what is known as the "Third Mahratta War," against Holkar and his ally of Bhurtpur.

The Grand Army had gone into cantonments for the rains of 1804, many of the troops billeted in the large Muhammadan tombs round Agra, and General Lake had to reassemble his army and his transport. Early in the autumn, Holkar, exulting in the destruction of Colonel Monson's force, appeared before Muttra with 90,000 men, and leaving his horse to conceal his movements and watch General Lake, he doubled on his course and unexpectedly appeared before the walls of Delhi on October 7th as just described.

As soon as he heard of Holkar's move General Lake followed in pursuit, and arrived at Delhi in time to save the garrison. Holkar, disappointed of his object, sent his infantry, and heavy artillery south again to join the Bhurtpur rajah, and himself, in true Mahratta fashion, started on a raiding expedition through the British Doab, at the head of all his mounted troops. If he could not beat the British in the open, it should be fire and sword, rape and torture, and loot in every British province he could get at.

No sooner had Lake information of Holkar's move than he, too, divided his force. Major-General Fraser, with the infantry, artillery, and two regiments of Native Cavalry, was sent after the Mahratta infantry, and with him went the famous 76th Foot. Up to now this regiment had always been with the General, and had borne the brunt of all his battles. As Prince Kraft would call for his boots and his pipe and his corps artillery, so when a hill fortress was to be stormed, or an unwavering line of guns and infantry to be charged, General Lake would order the 76th to the front.

## THE PURSUIT

It was now that the famous pursuit by the Cavalry Division commenced. General Lake took into the Doab with him the H.M. 8th, 27th, and 29th Light Dragoons, his Horse Artillery, and the 1st, 4th, and 6th Native Cavalry. A reserve brigade of infantry under Colonel Don followed on his tracks. Holkar himself had had a fair start.

While he had been besieging Delhi, a filibustering body of Sikh horse had entered British territory and surrounded the frontier station of Saharanpur, where the civil magistrate and a small escort were defending themselves. Immediately on Holkar's disappearance from Delhi, Colonel Burn had marched out with his own battalion and six guns to the rescue. This force had gone as far as Shamlee, when it was surrounded by Holkar and itself besieged. In the meantime General Lake had left Delhi on October 31st, and marched ten miles, following to Bagput, fifteen miles, the next day. At Bagput they learnt of Colonel Burn's plight, and pushed on next day thirty miles to Candlah, reaching Shamlee on the 3rd in time to see Holkar's dust in the distance. The force here halted a day to straighten out the affairs of the hard-pressed garrison, and square accounts with local abettors of the Mahrattas, and started off on November 5th for the long, dogged pursuit. Day in, day out, twenty to thirty miles a day, the enemy always a march to a march and a half ahead,—the advance guard constantly skirmishing with smaller parties, the flank guards with local chiefs. Now and again the force would tarry a few hours *en route* to batter in the gates of some mud fort whose garrison had fired on them. The Doab was then a lawless tract, every man for himself and none for the peasant and his land, while the British rule was too recent to have cleared out the reiving baron and the masterless man. Fortunately the crops were nearly ripe, there was plenty of good forage in the high *bajari*<sup>1</sup> stalks, and water was no difficulty.

<sup>1</sup> Millet.



It is interesting to imagine a cavalry force of those days, the dragoons in the old English leather helmet, black, but none the worse sun protection for that, the men in white breeches, little jackets with a very short tail, and probably half-boots. The General himself was scrupulously turned out, with a wide-brimmed cocked hat turned down on the sunny side, stock and choker, waistcoat and sash, and crimson cut-away jacket: an elderly man but as hard as nails, a martinet but much beloved, with a reputation, like Lord Gough nearly half a century later, for an unflinching faith in the bayonet. Like Lord Gough, his men pulled him through, when he should have waited for his guns, only too glad to follow when dash always brought victory, and rarely stopped to count the cost. In the East "*L'audace encore l'audace et toujours l'audace*" has always commanded success. Unfortunately, the pitcher went to the well once too often, and the next year found the British pulled up before a nut that was too hard for even General Lake's hard fist to crack. He was forced to retire from before the fortress of Bhurtpur, with a loss of over three thousand men, and it was not till twenty years later that Lord Combermere, the Stapylton-Cotton of Peninsula Cavalry fame, took the place. That, however, is another story, and we must return to General Lake at the head of his dragoons, and his galloper guns bounding over the tussocks of rough ryegrass, in full cry after Holkar, damning everyone that their horses could not fly.

For ten long marches more did that cavalry division press on, always skirmishing, with the Mahratta always on the never-never horizon, or atop the next butt. Fortunately for the Doab, the raiders had been so handsomely hustled that beyond burning everything that came in their path, and carrying off such maids as were worth the bother, not much harm was done.

But it is a long lane that has no turning, and at last, on the 15th of November, after a march of twenty-one miles to Allygunge, definite information was received that Holkar, with

all his force, had settled down for the night at Furruckabad, thirty-five miles further on.

The information was definite and certain, and there was an opportunity for a *coup*, so at 9 p.m. the General turned out his force in silence, leaving his camp standing. As the men were parading, the encouraging news was received of a victory gained by General Fraser over Holkar's infantry at Deig, below the fortress of that name, under the guns of which they had taken shelter. The Mahrattas lost 2,000 men and 87 guns, and the British 643, including 5 British officers killed and 17 wounded. Unfortunately, the General himself was mortally wounded, and Colonel Monson, succeeding to the command, had the satisfaction of recovering his own guns. To the news, then, of this crowning victory, General Lake and his troopers swung off into the night. The moon was up and the night cool, and several reports came in *en route* which spoke of Holkar's force indulging in a night's rest in fancied security.

As the first glimmer of day was breaking the leading patrols came on the enemy's camp, seeing the horses picketed and the men sleeping by them. The Horse Artillery were brought up, and immediately opened on the sleeping camp, and in the confusion that followed the discharge the 8th Dragoons charged into the camp, and the other regiments coming up in succession followed. The only untoward occurrence during the march had been the inexplicable explosion of an ammunition wagon, which, however, though heard by Holkar himself, was mistaken by him for the morning gun at the not far distant cantonment of Futtyghur.

The cavalry attack met with little resistance; the enemy, panic-stricken, fled in every direction. Here and there men stood in clumps with pike and matchlock, and Arabs and Afghans sold their lives for sheer lust of fighting, but even isolated resistance was short, and many, whose horses had stampeded, had concealed themselves in trees to be shot down or speared at leisure. Holkar himself had been awake all night,

and had been among the first to make for the open. After seeing a nautch the night before, he had, on retiring, been greeted with the same news of the battle of Deig as the British, and keeping the news to himself had spent a sleepless night. Prior to the attack, sixty thousand horse were said to be in Holkar's camp. Three thousand were killed that morning, and Holkar never succeeded in rallying more than thirty thousand again. The British loss was two dragoons killed, and some twenty of all ranks wounded, with seventy-five horses. The attack had been a timely one in other ways, for the day before, the outlying portion of Futtighur cantonment had been burned, and the few European officials driven into a small fort, which the Mahrattas would probably have stormed the next morning. Many of the Pathan or Afghan colony at Furruckabad, then a colony a hundred years old, had joined Holkar and were killed in the night attack.

The British pursued the fugitives for close on fourteen miles without coming up with Holkar himself, who never drew rein till he had crossed the Calini river, eighteen miles from Furruckabad on the Mainpuri road.

On November 17th, the British again followed on his tracks, arriving at Mainpuri cantonment on the 22nd. Holkar had passed by this place on the day after his flight with such of his cavalry as had rallied, and immediately commenced burning the British houses and government buildings, the inhabitants taking refuge in the gaol, which was defended by three companies of militia and one gun. On Skinner's Horse coming up, however, in pursuit, the Mahrattas made off again.

Holkar himself succeeded in joining his broken infantry in the fortress of Deig, and General Lake and his cavalry rejoined the infantry at Muttra, where they waited for a siege train before tackling that almost impregnable stronghold.

It is interesting to note that they did not get their medals till 1850, nearly fifty years after. Of the five regiments of Light Dragoons, the 8th, 19th, 25th, 27th, and 29th, that took part

in Lord Lake's and General Wellesley's campaigns, the 8th only has preserved unbroken existence, while most of the native cavalry and infantry of the Grand Army deliberately wiped out their records in the Great Mutiny. It is the British infantry and the Company's artillery and infantry now merged in the Imperial Army who chiefly retain the records.



THE 3RD LIGHT DRAGOONS AT FERESHAH, 22ND FEBRUARY 1846



## IV

### THE TWO SIEGES OF BHURTPUR (1805 AND 1826)

#### THE FIRST SIEGE

A HUNDRED years is a long time to remember. Since Lord Wellington, with scant patience, sat him down to besiege those fortresses in Spain that barred his progress, the British Army has not been largely concerned with sieges. Defences of a kind have been numerous, but the sieges have been but five, and the first of the five took place more than a century and a quarter ago. The other three were within the nine years from 1848 to 1857, commencing with the curious outbreak of a disgruntled governor against his own Indian masters, which ended in the siege of Multan, a story of tragedy and romance, then in 1854 the weary-long-drawn siege of Sebastopol, and last the ever famous story of the Ridge at Delhi.

The medal inscribed "To the Army of India," given for the campaign, bears last among its twenty-four clasps that for "Bhurtpur," and yet what of it? Who knows or cares of Bhurtpur and what befell there! of the dogged failure of Lord Lake, at the end of a career of daring triumphs, of the three thousand soldiers who fell before its walls to no avail, of all India watching the British for twenty years and more, in jeering wonder, and then the writing on the wall, and the capture after a prolonged siege and storm in 1826! The British corps that took part may treasure the memory—the native regiments that did so well, vanished in the debacle of 1857, and no one else remains to care, though as many troops took part in the final capture as landed in the Crimea.

Bhurtpur was a large, and in those days, strongly fortified city a few marches from Agra, the centre of the incomprehensible and warlike race of Jāts, to which some say the Gypsies of England belong. It was besieged and four times unsuccessfully assaulted by Lord Lake in 1805, from which date till Lord Combermere stormed the fortress in 1826, its rulers had scoffed at British supremacy, and harboured every wolfshead and every masterless man in the country side.

The first siege of Bhurtpur came about as an aftermath of the Third Mahratta War in succession to the episodes of the Second and Third Mahratta Wars just described and the defeat of the two great Mahratta States of Gwalior and Indore, ruled over by Sindia known as 'the *Patel*' and Holkar descended of the moss-trooper of Hol.

Bhurtpur was an ally of Holkar and though when Sindiah had made peace the Rajah of Bhurtpur had done the same, yet after Monson's debacle he thought, like many others, that he knew which was the cat would jump, and had joined the elated Holkar. While General Lake and his dragoons had been chasing Holkar's hordes of horse, General Fraser had destroyed his infantry under the walls of the Jāt fortress of Deig.<sup>1</sup>

A few days later Lake himself appeared before the fortress with a light siege train drawn hastily from Agra, and opening fire on November 14th stormed the place with his usual *élan* on the 22nd.

From thence he moved to settle accounts with the faithless Bhurtpur.

After the continuous marching and countermarching of the last twelve months, Lake was anxious to give his troops some rest, and turned on Bhurtpur in the hope that his luck would hold good, and that its capture would finish the campaign. The past year had been full of incident, stirring and dramatic in the extreme, notably the rescue of the blind Shah Alām from

<sup>1</sup> The "Army of India" medal has clasps both for the "Battle of Deig" and the "Capture of Deig."



the hands of the French Mahratta fraternity. We in these days do not realise how hard the French influence died in Hindustan. In the State of Hyderabad the adventurer soldier thrives in a mean fashion to this day, and the descendants of the French soldiers of fortune are still to be found there, while in the Punjab their tracks are still recent. In the Imperial Service Forces of Kashmir there were till recently Dogra officers who would drill a battalion in French, close on 150 years after the downfall of the French power in India.

Among the many incidents of Lake's campaign an amusing one comes down to us, and that is, how when the General was holding high Durbar in the Imperial city the day after his entry, the famous Begum Samru, or Sombre of Sardhana, came with her motley escort to pay her respects to success, and to the countrymen of her lover, George Thomas, her brute husband the drunken French sailor Sombre<sup>1</sup> having been dead some years. General Lake had lunched and lunched well, after the fashion of the days, and as the Begum entered the Durbar tent, he sprang down from his dias and kissed her soundly on both cheeks, whereat an uproar arose and some of her followers drew their swords. The Begum, however, airily remarked that he was her cousin and that such was the English custom, by which time the general had handed her to a seat beside him.

Returning to the General on his way to Bhurtpur, it is interesting to try and picture an Indian army on the march a century ago. At the head marched the cavalry, three regiments of jolly English dragoons, in the leather crested helmet, a protection equally against sword and sun, and as many more of irregular horse, for the native dragoon in a travesty of Georgian uniform had not then been evolved. Wide on the flanks marched the newly-raised horse artillery, the outcome of the earlier galloper guns, the gunners in the same dragoon helmets, which this arm continued to wear in India till the days of the Mutiny, the light pieces leaping and bounding to every tussock of coarse *kai* grass.

<sup>1</sup> Walter Reinhart, nicknamed *Sombre* from his gloomy character.

At the head of the infantry columns ride the general and his staff, a pad elephant for the convenience of reconnaissance lurching behind. General Lake, wearing an immense cheese cutter cocked hat, the right brim turned down against the morning sun, exactly as we wore our slouch hats in Africa, his grey hair *en queue* in the now failing fashion, rides a grey Arab and is cursing the carelessness of some of his rascally dragoons who have allowed some Pindaris to get at part of his baggage train. He is furious, and complains of being at the mercy of a damned incompetent staff and a pack of drowsy troopers, "as I was at Castlebar by gad," though for the matter of fact both staff and troopers had served him right well, as he fully recognised. Ever since he had been badly surprised by the French in Ireland, however, anything of the nature of an inroad upset his good humour.

Behind the General came the main infantry headed by the famous 76th foot (now suitably enough the 2nd battalion of the Duke of Wellington's Own West Riding regiment) in the uniforms already described, or as much of them as a year's wear and tear had left, also H.M. 75th and the 1st Bengal Fusiliers. With them marched four staunch and veteran battalions of Bengal Native Infantry, at a time when the old Bengal Army was at its zenith, and had not fallen into the hands of faddists to its bitter undoing, viz., the 2nd, 9th, 15th and 22nd Native Infantry.

The 76th had been through the campaign since the beginning, had stormed the astounding fortress of Aligarh and borne the brunt of the onslaught of the Mahrattas at Delhi, and led the attack at Laswaree, at a time when they were the only European infantry with the force. They were indispensable to General Lake, who used the corps as 'storm' troops for, in the morning he would call for his boots and his 76th Foot, and then attack. In the capture of Deig the week before, it was the 76th that had the place of honour and the most losses. Their casualties had been very severe in the campaign and the whole battalion had practically been replaced once.

The four sepoy battalions wore scarlet cut-away jackets and white shorts that left their legs free and bare. Their headgear was a low black shako, and had not yet developed into the monstrosity of later days, and their arm was the old flint fusil with the long bayonet. With the infantry lumbered the foot artillery, nines and twelves, and then the long yokes of bullock drawing the forty-pounder trains with tumbrils and mortar beds and all the impedimenta of a siege train. The long baggage trains of an army are much the same all the world over, and in one century as in another. The general appearance would be much the same as in India to-day, save that elephants are fewer and baggage far less.<sup>1</sup>

On January 2nd, 1805, the army swung into position before Bhurtpur, in which Runjhīt Singh, the Jāt Rajah, with a large force of Jāts and Mahrattas had ensconced himself. Outside, bodies of Holkar's cavalry hung about, having recovered from their previous beating, and with them was Jeswunt Rao himself, and Amir Khan the Pindari leader as well, with a large following of horse. The outer wall of Bhurtpur, some four miles in circumference, had an appearance of immense strength, consisting of huge bastions and curtains of solid masonry, covered with a thick layer of mud bricks. The bastions were extremely lofty and guns innumerable bristled from the tops, while round the whole ran a wide ditch crossed by narrow causeways and into which water could be admitted by a canal connected with a *jheel* hard by.

The General's first idea was to put his 76th at it and take the place by storm, and it is probable that the *élan* and determination of his troops, added to the prestige they had acquired, would have induced success. There is little doubt that in '57 Delhi would have fallen to an assault following on the battle of Badli ka

<sup>1</sup> It has been sung—

' In the days of Seringapatam  
We lived on chappatties and jam  
And marched hundreds of miles  
Behind *hathis* and *byles*  
In the days of Seringapatam.

Seria,<sup>1</sup> and the first return of the masters to the ridge, or even that Sebastopol would have yielded to a prompt advance of the Allies. The solemn preparations for a siege mean that every weak point is thoroughly defended and the assault indefinitely delayed.

General Lake allowed himself to be persuaded, and sat down to a siege with a very inadequate siege train. His shot and shell penetrated the thick mud coating of the walls without doing any damage. On January 7th, some infantry stationed outside the walls were dislodged and batteries at once established. By the 9th a rough scramble alley had been battered on the face of one bastion, and the impatient general ordered an assault for that night at 8 p.m. Three columns formed for the storming and filed out of the camp in the still of the evening. The centre columns consisting of the flank companies of the four European battalions and a native battalion, led the attack under Colonel Maitland. The leading men of the 22nd swam the ditch and scrambled up the wall but in the dark they were not followed immediately, and the surprised garrison hurrying to the ramparts had time to get into their breastworks and open a heavy fire on the stormers. The flank columns, delayed by unexpected obstacles, came up to the support late, and the men of the 22nd were forced back with heavy loss. Colonel Maitland himself was killed in leading the centre column to a second attempt and nearly every officer being down, the force made their way back to the trenches baffled more than beaten. Five officers and eighty-five men killed, and twenty-four officers and 371 men wounded, but General Lake, cheery and resolute, issued a hearty order and decided to have at them again, but by daylight this time. At 3 p.m. on the afternoon of the 21st, a storming party consisting of detachments of the 22nd, 75th and 76th, equipped with ladders and portable bridges, headed once more for the ill-omened breach. Behind followed the remainder of these corps and the 9th, 15th and 22nd Native Infantry, the whole under Colonel McRae. The defenders had not been idle

<sup>1</sup> Though it could probably not have been held.

since their victory, and a number of guns from the parapets had been collected round the breach. *Jingal* and *zumboorak*, field piece and *sher butcha* and every devil-mouthed contrivance that could belch old nails and grape, opened on the stormers as they breasted the breach. As success seemed impossible under the circumstances and men were falling in scores, Colonel McRae drew off his force with a loss of eighteen officers and 573 men.

The General, nothing daunted, thanked his men for their efforts, and cheered their spirits by falling on Amir Khan, the Pindari leader, who had ventured to tamper with convoys meant for better men than he. After this diversion, the besiegers took matters more quietly, pounding solidly away at walls that crumbled but slowly, till on February 10th, more fresh blood was added in the shape of reinforcements from Bombay under Major-General Jones. By this time the besiegers had prepared large quantities of rafts, ladders and fascines, while regular approaches had been made and the siege batteries pushed close to the walls. A mine had been laid to blow up the counterscarp, and at 4 p.m. on the afternoon of February 20th, the third assault took place.

The command was entrusted to Lieutenant-Colonel Don, who had greatly distinguished himself in Monson's disastrous retreat. The Bombay troops formed the bulk of the two flank columns and the centre was furnished by the original troops of the force, the 76th, of course, leading. The enemy had made two desperate sallies during that morning and the night before, but had been repulsed, not without severe loss to the besiegers, and the dead lay still about when the assault started. Something went wrong, what exactly is hard to say, the troops in the centre column were probably stale—they had fair reason to be. Fearing a mine they hesitated at the foot of the breach, in vain Colonel Don urged and incited them, but the men, the famous and invincible 76th would not look at the breach. In vain a forlorn hope of the 22nd sacrificed itself, in vain a few sepoy attempted the breach. The men were stale, badly stale, and hung about at the foot of the rubble only to

lose heavily. The 32nd Native Infantry with two guns tried the breach once more, while a column of the 86th entering one tower, captured eleven guns and actually removed them but were unsupported. The defenders sprang a mine, and this added to the confusion, so that the attempt was abandoned, though fourteen officers ran to the front and tried to persuade the men to take advantage of the enemy's confusion. The loss was twenty-eight officers and 894 men, to the chagrin of the General. Nothing daunted, however, he decided to renew his attack next day since the failure of the last seemed due to exceptional reasons. He addressed the troops on parade regretting the misconduct of the Europeans, referring to it more in sorrow than in anger, and called for volunteers for a storming party. Lieutenant Templeton of the 76th offered to lead the forlorn hope. At three o'clock of the next afternoon, the fourth assault commanded by the gallant if unthinking Brigadier Monson, filed out to the foot of the breaches, with a fine enthusiasm that spoke volumes for the discipline of the period. The troops were furnished by the 1st Europeans, the 65th and 85th Foot, and three battalions of Bengal Native Infantry, with every siege gun that could be brought to bear joining in, till very hell seemed loose.

In vain again, however, forlorn hopes struggled up the glacis, in vain sepoy and soldier vied with each other for the place of honour while staff officers shouted and regimental officers died in trying to lead the rank and file to impossible feats. Down the rubble slopes of the steep breaches, over the masses of corruption that were once smartly accoutred British soldiers and the debris of shot and shell in the ruins, half a score of cannon belched grape and canister and scrap iron, till close on a thousand of the stormers lay piled high, a horror and an offence in the sinking sun.

Dogged had failed to do it, for once in Lord Lake's career and the Brigadier sullenly withdrew his broken columns. Thirty-four officers and 987 rank and file was the butcher's tally that night.

The four assaults had cost the British 103 officers and 3,100 men, while the siege guns were worn out and the ammunition expended. The siege was therefore changed to a blockade, since loose his grip the General would not, and again he soothed his temper by falling on Amir Khan and Holkar, who had dared harass his rear once more. On this Runjhith Singh of Bhurtpur, weary of a defence which held little promise, expressed his readiness to treat, and finally agreed to render up the territories we had given him from those taken from Sindiah, and to pay twenty lakhs of rupees towards the cost of the war. Defeat could have hardly cost him more dear.

Lord Lake, for he had been raised to the peerage, "of Delhi and Laswarree," a fact on which the Bhurtpur Rajah had sent out to congratulate him in the middle of the siege, now turned once more on the irreconcilable Holkar and chased him north till he fled for safety to the Punjab, when the great Marquis Wellesley having been recalled, a peace-at-any-price Viceroy, Sir George Barlow, ordered Lake to return, and restored his lost dominions to Jeswunt Rao.

So though the Rajah of Bhurtpur had been content enough to purchase peace, yet throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan went the story of the invincible British, the cursed *Angrez*, four times hurled back from those grey mud towers, so that men said what one has done another may do, and every native prince in the land let hope rise in his breast. Bhurtpur blustered and swaggered, and built an immense new tower to his walls with the skulls of the British dead, but did not mention the twenty lakhs he had paid to loose the grip outside.

After that whenever the hand of the English fell heavy on the East, men would say, "Yah! bully us, but go and take Bhurtpur," and into that walled city gradually went for sanctuary half the illgotten treasure in Upper India. Thus closed the episode of the First Siege of Bhurtpur.

## THE SECOND SIEGE OF BHURTPUR

For twenty years the "*Fateh Burj*," the Tower of Victory, with its plinth of skulls, stood as a mark of promise to Hindustan. War succeeded war, potentates fought against the *Pax Britannica* from the south and west of India to Burma and the Himalayas, and all the time the taunt was in men's mouths "Go take Bhurtpur." After the fiascos and overwhelming losses from folly and disease which marked the first year of the now forgotten Ava campaign, the first of the three Burma wars, the prestige of the "Huzoors" did not stand high in the land, and the Pindari barons and Mahratta chiefs finally conquered in 1817-19, all looked for a sign.

In 1823 died Runjhith Singh of Bhurtpur, and a brother succeeded to the throne, to be shortly after poisoned by a nephew who seized the *gaddi*, and imprisoned the rightful heir, a lad some five years of age. The successor to Runjhith Singh had been recognised by us, and in the interest of his son, Doorjan Sal, the wicked nephew was declared a usurper. Sir David Ochterlony, he who twenty years earlier had helped defend Delhi against Holkar's hordes, denounced Doorjan Sal on behalf of the Governor-General and ordered a force to assemble and move at once to Bhurtpur, since he knew and none better, the ferment of which the walled city was the centre. On this the Governor-General Lord Amherst, with an army and a treasury heavily taxed to maintain the Burma war, ignoring the danger, counter-ordered the move and refused to ratify Sir David Ochterlony's promises of early reinstatement of the rightful heir to the throne. Sir David Ochterlony died shortly after, broken in heart at the rebuff and his supersession.

Relieved of the approach of the terrible "Lony Ochter" Doorjan Sal collected arms, powder and artillery and sent messengers to all the princes and States of Central India asking for support, and it was not till he had made his position extremely strong that the Government recognised that the action



of Doorjan Sal was a test case and all India the court. In December, 1825, a force of some 27,000 men with a big siege train moved on Bhurtpur under Lord Combermere, the Commander-in-Chief.<sup>1</sup> By December 11th, the city was invested with a cordon fifteen and a half miles long. The same tall walls of solid mud which had baffled Lord Lake still surrounded the city, and the Motee Jheel still supplied water to the moat. Guns innumerable crowned the walls and 25,000 Jāts, Pathans and Rajputs defended the city and its immense store of treasure. Lord Combermere's left wing surprised the Jāts in the act of cutting the dam that opened the moat to the waters of the jheel and thus prevented the ditch from becoming an obstacle.

There is a story of the old Duke and the Court of Directors who had applied to him for advice in their selection of a Commander-in-Chief. He recommended Combermere,<sup>2</sup> to which they demurred, saying that they understood that Lord Combermere was not a man of great brain. "Damn his brains," said the Duke, "I tell you Combermere is the man to take Bhurtpur." The Commander-in-Chief spent nine days in survey and reconnaissance, and finally decided to attack from the east, but made a feint of coming from the south-west, as did Lord Lake. Under cover of this feint the cordon was drawn far closer, and two important positions on the east were taken up, a desperate sortie being repulsed on the 23rd, made with the object of attacking the first parallel which was within 600 yards of the walls. Owing to the nearness of this parallel the Jāt guns could not be depressed sufficiently to reach the British batteries. On the 24th all women other than those of the Royal family were permitted to pass out and on the 25th a large force of the defenders' cavalry succeeded in cutting their way out. By the 26th the Jāt guns were silenced and the second parallel was

<sup>1</sup> Among the troops forming Lord Combermere's force, were the 11th Light Dragoons, 1st and 8th Bengal Cavalry, 14th and 59th foot. 1st Bengal Fusiliers, and the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 37th, 58th, and 66th Native Infantry, with the Sirmoor and Nusseree Rifle Battalions, as well as a large force of Bengal Artillery, both British and Native.

<sup>2</sup> The Stapylton-Cotton of Waterloo fame.

dug some 250 yards only from the city and by the 28th the approaches were within twenty yards of the walls. But in this "strange and gigantic concrete of earth" breaches, as Lord Lake had found, were no good. On the left a battery of fourteen heavy guns had battered one curtain for a week without making any real impression. Every heavy gun in Upper India had been brought to the siege and there was not an eighteen pounder to be found elsewhere at any place north of Allahabad, so on January 6th, it was decided to mine under the ditch to the big bastions. On the 7th a shell from the city blew up one of our ammunition tumbrils, and this exploded an adjacent magazine of 20,000 lbs. of powder—a heavy loss. The bombardment continued to distract attention from the mining. On the 13th, 1,808 shot and shell were fired into the city, and on the 15th, 1,416, rising to 1,894 on the 16th. The garrison continually sortied at night with great resolution. Our own mines more than once met the enemy countermining and on the 8th some mines exploded to give entrance to the counterscarp, where sixteen Gurkhas surprised some sixty of the enemy and destroyed them. It had been rumoured that the big breach by which a scramble way led to the top had been repaired and on the 20th five Gurkhas and half a dozen British volunteered to reconnoitre. They gained the top unmolested, fired a volley on the defenders and hurled stones, creating a great panic, escaping with only the loss of one of their number. Feeling was running high among the besiegers for some prisoners captured by the Jāts had been mutilated and put to death. A curious incident was the desertion to the enemy of a Corporal Herbert of the Bengal Horse Artillery who had been reduced.<sup>1</sup> He took an active part in working the enemy's guns, directing them with success on Lord Combermere's camp, and was finally hanged by us for his pains, on the capture of the city.

It was decided to make the attack on the "Long-necked" bastion and the north-east angle, and two mines under the

<sup>1</sup> Two other English and two Irish gunners went with him. Herbert had served at Waterloo. It would be interesting to know the grievance that worked on his mind.

former were exploded on the 16th bringing down the clay case with brick core and all the guns on top. The mine under the north-east bastion was complete on the 17th, filled to 10,000 lbs. powder, and fitted with a train 300 yards long.

It was arranged to spring the mine and then assault in two main columns, one under General Nicholls against the "Long-necked" bastion and the other under General Reynell against the North-east Bastion. A third column under Colonel Delamain was to attack a breach made by battering close to the Jageenah gate. A subsidiary column from General Nicholls' force was to assault a battered breach on the left of the "Long-necked" Bastion, and another force under Colonel Wilson was to turn to the right at the ditch and attack an outwork.

Before dawn on the 18th all the stormers had occupied the trenches and only awaited the explosions. The defenders with an intuition of what was going forward opened a heavy fire at daybreak till it was announced at 8 a.m. that all was ready. The mine by the breach near the Jageenah Gate was sprung first and then that in the counterscarp, west of the north-east angle.

These explosions brought the garrison crowding to the walls, 800 Pathan warriors rushing to the parapets of the huge north-east bastion which it was their duty to hold. Immediately the mine under this latter with its 10,000 lbs. of powder was fired. The ground heaved and rocked, and with a dull heavy roar half the bastion lurched and rose sullenly in the air, followed by clouds of thick pungent smoke carrying high into the air guns and gabions, Pathans, banners, swords and matchlocks to be strewn in their descent in one horrid confusion of mangled flesh and broken metal. Three hundred of the Pathans had been blown to pieces. As the smoke cleared, Reynell's leading brigade, which had also suffered somewhat from the explosion, consisting of a wing of H.M.'s 14th, the 58th Bengal Native Infantry and 100 Gurkhas of the Nusseeree Battalion, dashed at the reeking breach, while half a minute later Nicholls' column with loud cheers, went at the "Long-necked" bastion. The

defence of the Pathan bastion by the survivors of the explosion was desperate in the extreme, and both Reynell's brigadiers, McCombe and Patton, were struck down in the breach, while only seventy-five of the defenders escaped with their lives.

On reaching the summit of the Pathan (north-east) bastion, the first brigade, now led by Major Everard, turned to the right, and the second under Major Bishop swung to the left. These latter soon joined Nicholls' right which had diverged after the "Long-necked" bastion had been carried. Brigadier Edwards who led this assault had been killed and his brigade much knocked about, so that it was not till Fagan's second brigade came up that this force penetrated beyond the summit of the bastion they had won. Nicholls' reserve brigade under Brigadier Adams succeeded in entering the city by the Muttra Gate and clearing the streets.

Away on the British left Colonel Delamain's column, whose breach by the Jageenah Gate had been the first to be exploded, scaled the parapet and succeeded in forcing the defenders towards the gate, where there was a deep alley way some sixty feet below the rampart level, with only one flight of narrow steps leading down. As Delamain forced the Jāts back on this chasm, Everard's column came up from the east, and thus a number of them were penned in, with only the deep hollow street below them. Refusing surrender, they fought on with desperation, till hurled pellmell into the abyss. Some hundreds lay there dead or dying, their padded cotton coats catching fire adding to the horror, while their exploding bandoliers made any attempts at rescue a perilous one.

By this time Lord Combermere had come to the Jageenah Gate and received the news that a short time previously Major Hunter, of the 41st Native Infantry, had pursued a party of the garrison into the palace and inner fort, and that Khoosial Singh, brother-in-law of Doorjan Sal, with 100 followers had been shut out of the palace and refusing to surrender had been killed. Guns were sent to blow in the gates and it was finally found that Doorjan Sal and his immediate following had escaped by



1

1. The "Sutlej" Medal 1845-6



2

2. The Medal for the Capture of Seringapatam 1798



3

3. The "Punjab" Medal 1848-49



1

1. The Indian Medal of 1854 (for frontier campaigns)



2

2. The Indian Medal of 1854 (obverse)



3

3. The Indian Mutiny Medal. The third clasp for Delhi:  
 "Delhi (1857)" previously "Battle of Delhi (1803)"  
 "Defence of Delhi (1806)"



the Combheer Gate, cutting down a picquet of H.M.'s 14th who had opposed them.

Outside, the cavalry under Brigadier Sleigh had captured 6,000 fugitives, and at half-past two in the afternoon, seeing no sign of more, the Brigadier had dismissed his brigade. Hardly had this been done when the riding master of the 8th cavalry reported horsemen in the jungle and Lieutenant Barbor with his troop being ordered after them, was saddled up in time to capture Doorjan Sal himself, with his wife and child, the former surrendering with Barbor's pistol at his head.

In the meantime the whole city was in our hands, with the 37th Native infantry in the inner fort, their king's colour floating from over the gateway to the cheers of the soldiery. Next morning the Commander-in-Chief and his staff breakfasted in the palace, and the rightful heir, the son of the murdered Baldeo Singh, was reinstated, but in future as a vassal and in alliance with the British. The army then marched off for the frontier of Alwar, taking with them the usurper, Doorjan Sal, who was maintained as a *detenu* at Benares.

Thus ended the siege of Bhurtpur, and thenceforward no state remained south of the Sutlej to dispute the sovereignty of the Huzoors.

Of the 25,000 or so said to have been the garrison of the city, it is believed that 13,000 were killed or wounded and that 4,000 perished in the grand assault, so that men said that no wise men would ever again quarrel with the Sirkar. One hundred and thirty-five pieces of ordnance were captured, and immense treasure, of which the troops were granted a large portion of prize money (some £480,000). The total British loss was under 1,100, a very different tally from that of the first siege. Two years later Lord Combermere went there on a visit and was well received. In the strain of the Mutiny thirty years later, the Jāt contingent naturally enough, went with the majority.

## V

### THE PINDARI WAR

#### THE BATTLE OF KIRKEE

November 5, 1817

“The hawk-winged horse of Damajee,  
Mailed squadrons of the Bhao.”

—(*With Scindiah to Delhi.*)

#### MAHRATTA AND PINDARI

It has chanced that November the Fifth shall be a day of doings and remembrance within this British domain. Apart from the irony of memory that should make Mr. Guido Fawkes' brilliant idea become the happy feast day of British youth, it has been the date of more than one memorable feat of arms which we also “remember.” On the Fifth of November, 1854, was fought on the Heights of Inkerman that famous “soldiers' battle,” when all day long, huge, grey-coated hordes poured out of Sebastopol, and fell on the small British force that had so rashly set itself down before the fortress.

It appears to be a day famous to small forces who achieve victories, for on that date, 1817, was fought the battle, against huge masses of Mahrattas, the troops of the Peshwa, on the plains of Kirkee hard by the “Bullock's Hump” at Ganesh-Kind, which once and for all put the question at rest as to the relationship between the Mahrattas and the British amid the ruins of the Turkish Empire of Delhi.

Some outline of the second and third wars between the British and one or other of the chiefs of the great Mahratta confederacy has been given.



The Mahrattas are one of the most virile of the peoples of Western India, and as a military class their rank and file attained a fame in the old wars which, forgotten during the ages when military thought has been concentrated on the northern races, sprang into the first place again in the World War. Ethnologically they are as explained an earlier people mingled with some Aryan or Jāt strain, and among them as financiers, counsellors, ministers, but not men of the sword, are the race with the acutest brains perhaps in the whole world, the Brahmins, who from time immemorial have settled among the Mahrattas and are known as Mahratta, or more accurately Dekhani Brahmins.

We may be sure that if India can achieve under a more advanced scale of self-government any stability and success, it is the Dekhani Brahmin who will be most prominent among her public men, though it is said that their mastery of and instinct for intrigue may be their undoing hereafter, as in days gone by. But though they have perhaps as a whole always been hostile to British dominion, they have given innumerable faithful officers and lesser servants to the British administration, as the martial classes have given to the army.

The famous history of this brilliant people is germane to the events which led up to that battle on the Guy Fawkes' day which brought the *Pax Britannica* to the sore pressed peasantry of the country-side over which the Mahratta horsemen roamed at will, predatory and rapacious beyond belief.

Some years ago, the officer commanding the artillery at Kirkee, was Colonel Holberton, C.B., almost the last of the "Company's Gunners" in India, who as a lad in the Bombay Artillery had served in the suppression of the Mutiny and concomitant rebellion among the Southern Mahratta tribes. The artillery used to drill, nay do still, on the plain where took place the battle, and close to the Mahratta<sup>1</sup> College of Science. The Principal of the College forty years ago had written to

<sup>1</sup> Whose students are or were largely Brahmin.

Colonel Holberton to know by what authority he manœuvred his batteries so close to his precious college, and the colonel had returned the laconic and to our minds delightful answer, "Authority, Battle of Kirkee, November 5, 1817." The point was not susceptible of further argument.

The story of Maharashtra, the rise of the Mahratta confederacy, and their crushing defeat at Panipat at the Afghan hands, has been told, as also their being brought to a due sense of their true position in a peaceful India, forty years later, at the hands of Lord Lake and Arthur Wellesley, the instruments of the latter's brother, the Governor-General, and how the five great chiefs entered into subsidiary alliance and treaty with the Crown through the agency of the Company.

The East Indian Company and Parliament, appalled at the prospect of Empire and greatness that the genius Marquis Wellesley and the strange fate that compelled the British destiny had thrust on them, sent King Log to reign where King Stork had been supreme. The enemies of Great Britain raised their heads again and dreamed once more of driving the strange white race into the sea.

For generations had the Mahrattas carried on their licensed system of plunder, demanding the *Chouth* or fourth part of the revenue, and had even reached to the walls of Calcutta and of Fort St. George at Madras. It was hardly to be expected that the squires and barons and leaders of horse who marched under their banners could speedily acquiesce in the *Pax Britannica*, especially when the strong policy of Wellesley was relaxed. Moreover, there had long been growing up on the banks of the Nerbudda and around the hill fastnesses in Central India, an Alsatian coterie of free-lance bands, relics of Mogul horse, expatriated Rohillas with tribal connections in Central Asia, and all the derelict fighting men that the dying of such a system as the Mogul Empire has seen produced in many lands.

From the Nerbudda, in the winter season, these hordes, known as Pindaris, would sally forth to rob, to rape, and to murder, and would attach themselves to any of the big Mahratta

chiefs who would have them, or who would plunder on their own. For hundreds of miles the countryside called to High Heaven for relief from their atrocious cruelties and exactions. The Mahratta chiefs took no steps to suppress them, indeed openly intrigued with them in the hope of trying once more a decision with the British for the paramountcy of Hindustan. Once again the Governor-General, now Lord Moira, better known by his soldier name in the American War of Independence as Francis Rawdon, had to set armies in motion from the south and the east and the west, to put an end to the robber hordes on the Nerbudda, and he called on his Mahratta allies to support him.

Under Lord Wellesley's policy the Mahratta chiefs received subsidiary British forces to help prevent the internecine attacks which had so long ensued between Mahratta and Mahratta, and Mahratta and Nizam. The commencement of the Pindari war saw the Bhonsla and the Peshwa treacherously attack their subsidiary forces. Together with Holkar they then joined the Pindaris; the faithless Baji Rao played into every hand, but used heaven and earth to set the whole confederacy going against the British, by whose help alone he held his throne. It is not the purpose of this paper to follow the military story of the campaign. The medal "To the Army of India," which bears the clasps for Wellesley's and Lake's great battles, also carries several for this series of wars.

The "Defence of Seetabaldi" and "Seetabaldi" commemorate the attacks by the Bhonsla on his Resident and escort, "Kirkee and Poona," and "Coregaum" the Peshwa's attempts, while at "Mehidpur" the army of Holkar was destroyed.

But the dramatic story which is to be told here is that of the events which led to the battle of Kirkee, and the attempts made by the Peshwa to "do the dirty" on his friends. It was this victory that resulted in the abolition of the Peshwa, and the annexation of Poona and its country, and it is therefore the outstanding feature of the story, made the more interesting because of the romantic setting in which the Peshwa's capital

lies. With the battle the modern history of Western India begins, and the settlement with the other chiefs which has endured, with one exception, to this day.

For many years there had been direct relations with the Peshwa, and from 1785 a British Resident had been deputed to his court. The Resident dwelt at the *Sungam*, a junction of the Moola and the Moota rivers, which wind in an intricate manner round Poona, and a spot famous for its beauty and amenities. The Peshwa's capital lies on the opposite bank, a mass of tiled roofs and temple spires with the green background of the Ghats behind, steep, rugged mountains, which to the right attain a rugged height where stands the ancient Moslem fortress of Singhar, and which then was a Mahratta stronghold. The country to-day is amply wooded, but a century or so ago was far less so. Far and near in the mountains round, ancient Moslem and Mahratta forts frown down on every pass and trade route. From the 'nineties onward a subsidiary force, paid for by the Peshwa, but organised by the British, was stationed at Garpir outside the city. This force had not taken part in the battle of Harapsar already referred to, when Holkar beat the combined force of Sindiah and the Peshwa. After Wellesley had replaced the Peshwa on his throne in 1803, a regular British force had moved into Garpir in support of the latter, and the subsidiary force had moved to Dapooree, a site some four miles north of the *Sungam* on the left bank of the Moota, which curls right back and here runs in the opposite direction to that when it joins the Moola.

### THE BATTLE OF KIRKEE

All 1817 the Peshwa had been intriguing to induce the other Mahratta chiefs to resist the British plans for exterminating the Pindari evil and generally to combine in conjunction with the Pindaris against the British in one more attempt to dominate India. The work of the Marquis Wellesley had not been finished off, and it now seemed likely to need doing afresh.

The British force at Poona was under very much the same conditions as to this day holds at Secunderabad, where a large British force dwells close to the Nizam's capital of Hyderabad, placed there originally for his protection. It consisted, in the autumn of 1817, of the 2/1st, 2/6th, and 1/7th Bombay Infantry with six light guns, to which had lately been added the Bombay European Infantry from Bombay, sent at the request of Mr. Elphinstone, the Resident, who was fully aware of the Peshwa's actions, and had especially grown apprehensive at the large number of Mahratta troops which were gathering in the vicinity of Poona.

The Garpir cantonment was in a singularly indefensible position, and would have been abandoned earlier for some better spot, had not the Resident feared to precipitate a crisis which after all might yield to reason and expostulation. It should be noticed that this factor, while often leading to the passing of a crisis, has more than once induced a grave disaster when the bluff has failed—but then our Empire in India has risen often enough on sheer bluff so far as fighting has been concerned.

The forces now assembled on the Bamburda plain between the 'Bullock's Hump' and the Moola were vast. They were under the command of one Gokla, who had at one time commanded Mahratta auxiliary horse under Wellesley, with several *Panj-hazaris*<sup>1</sup> of horse under Moro Dixit and Vinchorla and other Mahratta leaders, and several of the Peshwa's regular battalions, with some European training and a large mass of guns.

By the 5th of November it was evident that the crisis had arrived. Mr. Elphinstone, who represented the supreme government now directed Colonel Burr, of the Bombay Europeans, who commanded the force, to move out to Kirkee village, crossing the joint Moola-Moota river by the ford near Yellora, and then make for Holkar's Bridge over the Moola, and thence to the knoll on which stood the little village. While Burr was establishing himself here, Vinchorla brought his horse to swarm

<sup>1</sup> *Panj-hazaris*—a corps of 5,000.

round the Residency in a threatening manner. The Resident determined to join Colonel Burr at once, but could not pass by the direct route and was compelled to cross the Moola by the ford near his garden and recross by Holkar's Bridge. With him went his escort, some 250 bayonets of Bengal Infantry. By 4 p.m. he was with the force at Kirkee.

It is on record that the colonel, though a staunch old soldier, was somewhat past his prime. Elphinstone, who had been the political officer with Wellesley, was a man of ability and enterprise and was a goad in his side. That pernicious interference of the political officer with the soldier, which at one time was so bitterly resented and was carried to such absurd lengths, was no doubt often the result of the advanced age at which the Company's officers attained command.

The Mahratta force, Elphinstone considered, would only become more dangerous for every hour it was allowed to defy the British. Four of the afternoon of the Deccan autumn day was the best of all hours to start a fight so far as temperature went. There would be two and a half hours of daylight, and he judged that a determined front and an advance would at any rate diminish the Mahratta ardour.

The force with Colonel Burr now consisted of one European and three regular native battalions, and six light guns, as well as the Resident's escort. At Dapuree, waiting under arms, was the subsidiary force, under Captain Forde, two more weak battalions and four more light guns. All the artillery was in bullock draught. The 2/6th Bombay Infantry, less its flank companies, was left entrenched at the village with two of Colonel Burr's guns and the kit. The rest of the force advanced in line south-west towards the Bullock's Hump, on both sides of which could be seen the Mahratta camps with a long line of guns in action, both right and left of the Hump. Behind them lay a brown range of flat-topped hills; beyond, the great range of the Ghats and the fortress of Singhar.

The line consisted of the 2/7th Bombay Infantry on the left, then the Bengal Detachment, and the European Regiment in

the centre, with the 2/1st Bombay Infantry on the right. On both flanks were two guns. At the same time, Captain Forde was ordered to cross the Moota and join the right of the British as they advanced.

The line now moved forward in this order over the open plain, in full view of the Mahrattas, for about a mile, and then brought up its left shoulder to a halt in the open somewhere in the position of the present Kirkee race-course. By this time Forde's battalions were approaching, and large bodies of cavalry moved forward from the Mahratta position. A great mass under Moro Dixit, Captain Forde's friend,<sup>1</sup> bore down on his battalions, which hastily formed front to their right. The charge was repulsed, Moro Dixit being hit by a shot laid, it was said, by Forde himself.

It is said that the Peshwa, always irresolute, and who had been upset by the ill-omened breaking of the shaft of the *Juri Phatka*, or the yellow standard of the Confederacy, was watching affairs from the Hill of Parbutti, and had ordered Gokla to refrain from commencing the battle. But he was too late. The Mahrattas were surging and excited, and the horse were already fully committed. Their infantry now advanced, while large bodies of horse had left them behind and were threatening the British left. A regular Mahratta battalion under the command of a Major De Pinto appeared in the scrub and gardens on the British left, and the 2/7th broke the line in their anxiety to close with them. Gokla, who was apparently a vigilant commander, seeing this, himself led a body of 6,000 horse into the gap, his guns ceasing fire as he flung this force against the right flank of the 7th. Stout old Colonel Burr, who had formerly commanded the 7th, hurried to the battalion's side and placed himself by their colours. There is no voice like that of a former colonel to steady a native corps. His two orderlies were shot at his side and his horse wounded, while a bullet went through his own shako. Thus encouraged, the 7th withstood the storm and beat off the cavalry, who had, moreover, got involved in

<sup>1</sup> Captain Forde was on intimate terms with many Mahratta chiefs.

the muddy bottom of one of the small ravines which intersected the plain. Gokla's horse was killed under him, and the charge had failed. The horse swept on and round the red line and rallying squares, and then flew off to attack the village of Kirkee, where they were also repulsed. While this was in progress, a body of 3,000 Arabs and Gosains moved down against the British right but were beaten off by the 1st Bombay Infantry.

With the failure of this attack the Mahrattas began to drive off their guns, and the day was over. The British line re-formed and took post on the higher part of the plain to their front, and bivouacked on the field. Next day troops from Sirur marched in, and seven days later the British, now commanded by Brigadier-General Smith, advanced against the Mahratta force which was holding a line covering Poona from the direction of the Yellora ford and what is now the Bund Bridge. The Mahrattas are defeated with little loss and make off for the open country by the Babdeo Ghat and for Singhar. Several guns are captured by a party of British horse at the foot of the high hills.

While these events are in progress, somewhat similar happenings have occurred at Nagpur. A little later Baji Rao endeavours to destroy a small British force moving into Poona from Sirur, at the ever memorable fight of Coregaum. The Bhonsla attacks the Resident and his escort on Seetabaldi Hill, and is eventually defeated at the battle of Seetabaldi by the arrival of the army of the Dekhan. Sindiah, perhaps, by the wise advice of the Resident at his court, "King" Collins, of happy memory, abstains from breaking his treaty. Holkar must needs catch the war fever, and his forces are smashed at the Battle of Mehidpur. Then follows the breaking up of the Pindari hordes in central India and the hunting of the lawless *lashkars* of Mahratta horse, a long and weary but fascinating drama. At last, in 1819, it comes to an end, Holkar and the Nagpur Rajah make peace on British terms. The evil and forsworn Raj of the Peshwa is brought to an end, and his territory annexed—Baji Rao and his horse are hunted till he surrenders and ends his life a pensioner near Cawnpore.



Long and weary as were the operations, it is the defeat at Kirkee of the massed Mahratta forces which sounded the knell of Mahratta power. Had Colonel Burr been overwhelmed, Sindiah could hardly have held to his treaty, and risings might have extended to every direction. Kirkee was the turning-point. The Rajah of Sattara was reinstated in a small principality, and to this day the agreements with Holkar and Sindiah and the Gaikwar remain. The Bhonsla's territory was annexed by Lord Dalhousie just before the Mutiny for want of an heir, and the family of the Peshwa disappeared with his adopted son, the Nana, after '57.

But to this day the people of the Dekhan will tell you that you can hear o' nights the tramp of the myriad horse of Baji Rao in their restless sweep of the countryside.

## VI

### THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR, 1839-42

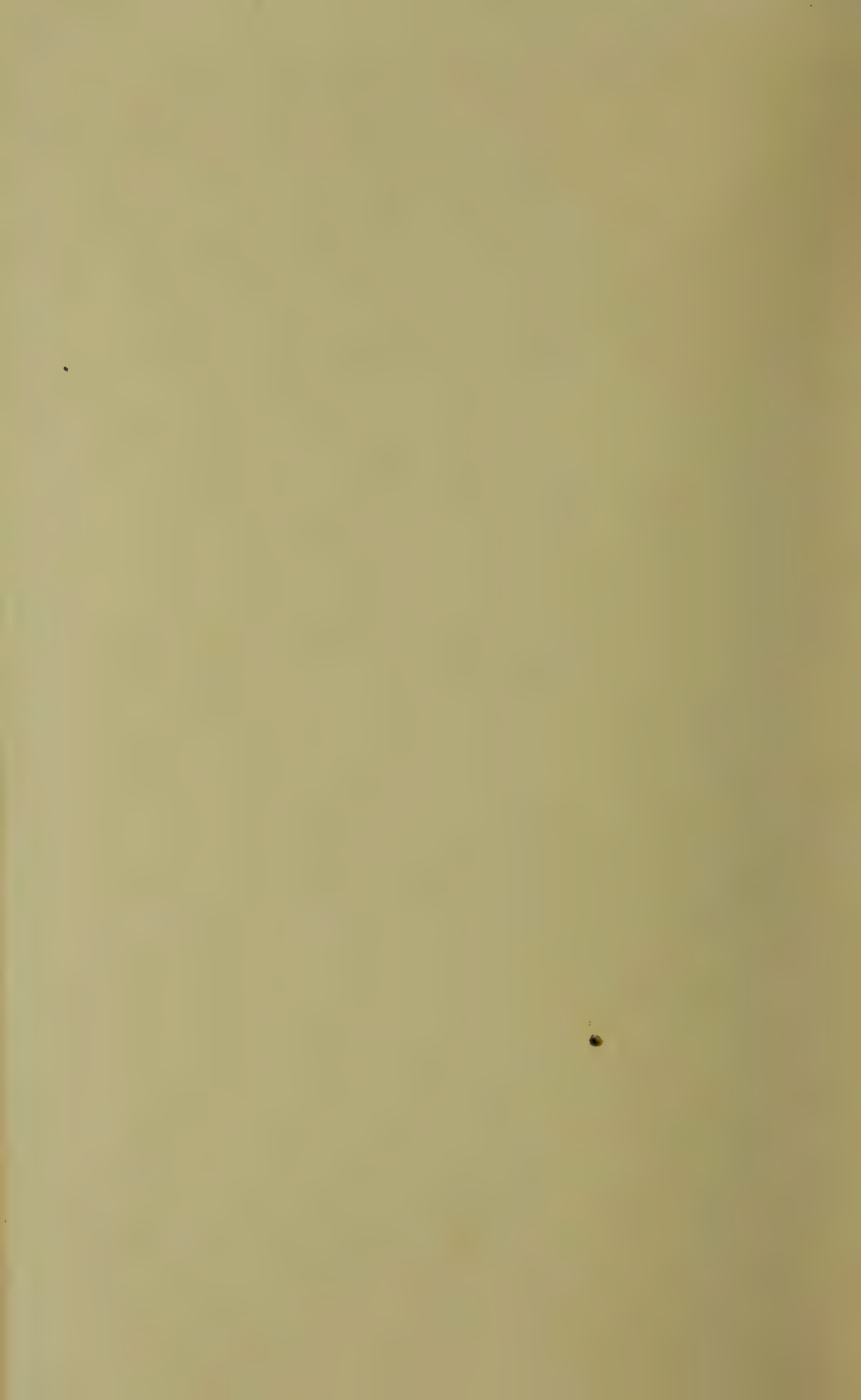
#### THE ILLUSTRIOUS GARRISON

FROM time to time chance, circumstance, or design have applied epithets to men and to events which "on the stretched forefinger of all time sparkle for ever." In 1842 Lord Ellenborough, Governor-General of the East Indies, giving the rein to his inherent admiration for deeds military, applied, in his general order announcing the belated successes in Afghanistan, the term "Illustrious Garrison" to the troops which held Jalalabad for many weary months. The army scoffed somewhat, as armies will, just as the army on the Modder talked of Buller the Ferryman, and the army in Natal scoffed at the force relieving Kimberley, and as the troops on the heights of Inkerman scoffed at the Light Brigade. It is the way of armies and is not all evil. The "Illustrious Garrison" was better known as "Sale's Brigade" at the time, but later the Governor-General's epithet stuck in men's minds when memory, as to the particular event that had evoked it, faded.

H.M. 13th Foot, now the Somersetshire Light Infantry, carry to this day among their honourable devices the mural crown, that stock heraldic emblem to commemorate a siege. They alone of that garrison still figure in the Army List. The gallant, patient, faithful 35th Native Infantry who, like Clive's sepoy at Arcot, gave up their rations to the Europeans, blew up with nine-tenths of the Bengal Army in the cataclysm of '57, carrying away with them a century of history. Backhouse's Mountain Train, Ferris' Jezailchis, Broadfoot's Sappers, remain but in the pages of military annals. The famous 13th alone are still in being.



SHAH SHUJAH-UL-MULK



How the "Illustrious Garrison" earned the epithet, and why, is a thrice-told tale, but one that fades constantly. It is full of interesting sidelights, too, on the wars of the English, and worthy of being re-studied.

How and why the British came to be in Afghanistan at all is a long story, and one which had its beginning half a century before. In August, 1798, there was published in London, by one John Fairburn, of 146 The Minories, a coloured map styled as follows:

"Fairburn's New Chart,  
Exhibiting

THE ROUTE OF GENERAL BUONAPARTE  
in the Mediterranean Sea

With the countries through which the French Army must  
pass, viz:

Egypt and the Red Sea and the Gulf of Persia  
TO MANGALORE

In the territory of Tippoo Sahib in the East Indies."

At that time, and in the years immediately following it, as already explained in "Lord Lake's Campaigns," Napoleon Buonaparte and the Emperor of Russia were making plans for the invasion of India by land, coupling with the original proposals the intention of coming to the assistance of "Citizen Tippoo." From that day onwards the Bear has ever cast his shadow forward on the borders of India. The defence of India was the subject of many memoranda and pamphlets so far back as the opening years of the nineteenth century, and by 1835 was the subject of anxious study for statesmen and strategists. More immediate, at the beginning of that century, however, was the danger from Afghanistan and the Durani Empire. The Emperor, Shah Zeman, was constantly threatening another invasion, and half India looked for him to help drive the English to the sea. For many centuries the men of the North had poured into Hindustan at will, and for the last fifty years the Duranis had been struggling with the Mahrattas

for the source of power. Russia and Afghanistan together therefore had long loomed large, and these facts should be borne in mind when we try to gauge the impressions of the day. In those early years of the nineteenth century, too, our activities in Persia had been considerable, directed, above all things, to countering the French interest and ambition. The constant wars between the Afghans and the Sikhs and the requirements of commerce in opening up the navigation of the Indus all combined to make us sensitive, even so far back as the thirties, to the trend of events in Afghanistan and beyond.

In 1837 Mahomed Shah, the Shah-in-Shah of Persia, sent a large army to conquer Herat, with Russian officers attached to it. Shah Kamran, the Viceroy of the Province, one of the few of the original blood royal of Kabul, determined to hold the city, and embarked on a defence which lasted from November, 1837, to September, 1838, when a threat of a British expedition in the Persian Gulf, and the persistence of the defence, into which Eldred Pottinger had so opportunely dropped, caused the Persians to raise the siege. In 1836 Captain Alexander Burnes proceeded to Sind and Kabul on a diplomatic and commercial mission. Friendly though his reception at Kabul was, nothing definite resulted, and there was also present one Nikovitch, an energetic young Russian *avant-courier*. Eventually the failure of Burnes' mission, the attack by the Persians on Herat, and a desire to create a strong and friendly Afghanistan, resulted in the treaty between the British, Runjhit Singh, Maharajah of the Sikhs, and Shah Shujah, the exiled ruler of Kabul, to place the latter on the throne of his fathers as an ally and protégé of the British.

How the British Army crawled from Ferozepore on the Sutlej, where it had assembled, down the Indus to Sukkhur, up the Bolan to Quetta, and thence to Kandahar, hampered by want of carriage, immense baggage, and cholera, may be read in any history of the time. Once in the granary and fruit garden of Kandahar, the now united forces from Bengal and Bombay recovered from the fatigues and disasters of their journey,

while the exiled King was by way of taking over his new provinces. The next stage was the advance on Kabul, in which the capture of the historic fortress of Ghuzni by a *coup de main* was a brilliant episode. During the whole of the long circuitous route from the borders of the Punjab to Kabul the storming of Ghuzni was the only important military action, though there had been skirmishes and harassments galore.

The Army of the Indus, as the force was called, started from Ferozepore in December—9,500 fighting men, 38,000 followers, and 30,000 camels. The baggage of the officers was immense, while the military authorities had no knowledge of how to reduce it. It was the end of April before the force reached Kandahar, having been joined at Sukkhar by a force from Bombay. With the Army had advanced also the Shah's Contingent, a force hastily raised in the northern cantonments of India from indifferent material, commanded by British officers lent to the Shah's service. It was not till the first week in August, 1839, that the Shah and Sir John Keane arrived at Kabul. Dost Mahomed, usually termed "the Dost," the popular elected ruler of Afghanistan, fled, abandoning a large park of artillery, while the Shah re-entered his capital and the palace fort of the Bala Hissar, from which his subjects had expelled him some years before.

The object of the expedition had therefore been attained. The Shah sat on the throne of his fathers. His Contingent garrisoned his capital and his outposts, and had been increased by enlistments of his own subjects. But it was not possible to abandon him to his own resources. The methods of an Afghan ruler to those who belonged to opposing factions alone tied our hands. While we were there we could not acquiesce in Afghan methods. Yet if we foist an unpopular ruler on a turbulent people, and are too nice to let him strengthen his position by the only means he and his enemies recognise, we must take the consequences. The consequences were that for many reasons we could not abandon the Shah to his own resources, nor could we avoid appearing the real wielders of

sovereignty. We reduced the costly army of occupation, but still had to garrison the country with our own troops. A British retrenchment force escorted the whole of the Shah's large female establishment across the Punjab and up the Khaiber to Kabul, including the old blind Emperor, Shah Zeman, the father of Shah Shujah. Perhaps of all the actions of that time, the one we can least understand was the despatch also of the families of our own officers and men to Kabul. Right across the alien and increasingly hostile Punjab, up the Khaiber and subsequent passes to Kabul itself, went the British ladies with their nurses, and their babies, and their pianos, to the new cantonment at Kabul, and with them the families of the British and native soldiers, all by way of adding to the activity and mobility of a force isolated by several hundred miles of difficult roads from our own territory. To us in these days, who will not allow ladies even into our frontier posts, the arrangement is astounding. However, so it was. During the remainder of 1839 and through 1840 the surface was calm, and our officers at Kandahar, at Ghuzni, and at Kabul, lived the life of a cantonment as if they had been in distant Hindustan and on very friendly terms with the Afghan. We read in Sir Neville Chamberlain's Life, of officers of the Ghuzni garrison riding into Kabul for the Christmas festivities, or for the races, as if it had been Poona or Meerut.

In 1841 the situation had become more openly menacing. The principal forces in Afghanistan were Elphinstone's brigade at Kabul, and Nott's at Kandahar, with the Contingent scattered about the province, chiefly round Kabul, and in the Kohistan or mountain tracts north of Kabul. The year had begun with everything *couleur de rose*. The Dost, after an unsuccessful incursion into the Kohistan, had surrendered and had been sent to an honourable captivity in India. Towards the summer, however, risings began to break out, each month growing more perplexing. The Ghilzais between Kabul and Jalalabad were especially warlike. There was no regular line of communication between Kabul and Peshawur, though posts of Khaiber "Rangers," the forerunners of the Khaiber "Rifles"



of to-day, were dotted along it. Now and again forces moving in relief marched up the road, and stores came through by contract with Ghilzai camel-owners. Sale, with the 13th and other troops, was due to return to India, and it was decided to send him to tackle the Ghilzais. In October, 1841, Monteath and Broadfoot moved out on the Jalalabad road, and were shortly joined by Sale with the 13th and other troops.

For a whole month this force marched, halted, and fought with the Ghilzais between Kabul and Jalalabad, with no great success, suffering considerably in the process. All the snipers from Snipersville congregated along the line of march. The force marched by the southerly route of the Khurd Kabul and Jagdallak Passes, arriving at Jalalabad on November 12th. About November 8th a report of the serious trouble that had broken out in Kabul reached them, with the news of the murder of Sir Alexander Burnes and several others (including Broadfoot's brother). Sale at this time received orders to return to Kabul, but in view of the extreme fatigues of the passage through the passes, the difficulty of supply on the road back, and the debilitated state of his transport, he decided that this was impossible, and that he must move on to Jalalabad. His rearguard had been pursued and harassed right up to the walls of that town, into which he decided to move, after examination of its defences, on the next day.

The force that actually arrived at Jalalabad and constituted the "Illustrious Garrison" was as follows:

- H.M. 13th Light Infantry—Colonel Dennie.
- 35th Bengal Native Infantry—Colonel Monteath.
- Detachment Bengal Artillery—Captain Abbott.
- Squadron 5th Cavalry—Captain Oldfield.
- Shah's Mountain Train—Captain Backhouse.
- Shah's Sappers—Captain Broadfoot.<sup>1</sup>
- Troop 2nd Shah's Cavalry—Lieut. Mayne.
- Shah's Jezailchis (200)—Jan Fishan Khan.

<sup>1</sup> Largely composed of Hazaras, the Tartars in the uplands beyond Ghuzni, who still enlist in our Hazara Pioneers.

This force had no supplies, only 150 rounds ball ammunition per rifle, and had no base or line of communications to feed it. What it could take by force, or purchase for money, was all it had to live on. It was not, therefore, to be wondered at that its commander hesitated to return to Kabul. Captain Havelock, of the 13th, was the brigade-major and Captain MacGregor of the Bengal Artillery was political officer.

The town of Jalalabad lies perhaps a half of the way between Peshawur and Kabul. Coming up through the Khaiber Pass, the country opens out to some extent into the plains of Ningrahar, before the road to Kabul enters the fearsome defiles of the Lataband, Seh Baba, and Khurd Kabul Passes. Jalalabad stands on the Kabul river near where the Kunar river from Chitral joins the former. North of the town lie the mountains of Kafiristan, that land of fable from which Sir George Scott Robinson has lifted the veil in modern times and destroyed romance. For long had the world dreamed of an isolated race descended of Alexander's Greeks; and it was only a dream. With the exploration of Kafiristan and the penetration of a British force into Lhasa have disappeared, perhaps, the last two fairy-stories of Asia. Any that may remain will come from the storehouses of Khotan and the researches of Dr. Stein. However that may be, the Kafiristan hills, that land of a strange race that knows not Islam nor Indra, look down from the north on Jalalabad, while to the south towers the huge snow line of the Sufaid Koh. West lies Kabul, and east lies India.

Jalalabad is a walled town, with curtains and bastions of sun-dried mud bricks, plastered with mud and chopped straw, a material only possible where rains are but seasonal. Round the town stretched gardens and orchards, also surrounded with crumbling town, the relics of a day when Mogul and Durani Emperors pitched their camp there during a passage through their dominions. Apples, apricots, and peaches grew in some profusion; the almond-tree flourished and the vineyards yielded heavily. As Kabul lost its touch with India, Jalalabad lost its importance, and its gardens fell into ruin. Outside the walls,

old tombs of dead nobles crumbled to decay, willow-trees grew on the irrigation cuts, and clumps of Lombardy poplars edged the approaches. It was a difficult place to defend with the area outside the walls so encumbered.

Such, however, was the engineering problem before Captain George Broadfoot, of the Madras Infantry, commandant of the Shah's Sappers, more generally known as Broadfoot's Sappers, and field engineer to Sale's Brigade. In addition to the obstacles and enclosures referred to, an old wall lay outside the town, and had collected that ever-shifting sand which is so marked a feature of the Suliman range and its valleys. High sandhills at a range of from 500 to 1,000 yards had thus been formed to the west and south-west. The Afghans at once attempted to invest the town from this side while a piper played for them on one of the sandhills. A sortie was successful, and obtained a fortnight's quiet, which enabled Broadfoot to work at the defences and MacGregor to collect supplies from any who would sell.

All November the brigade rested and worked at the defences till, on the 28th, the enemy closed and had to be driven off by another sortie. During the month rumours of more trouble and of a capitulation at Kabul were rife. In December little occurred save that Colonel Wild, with a brigade of sepoy battalions, reached Peshawur, the said Peshawur, be it remembered, being many hundred miles across a semi-hostile country from the British frontier at Ferozepore. At the very end of December came rumours of the murder of Sir William Macnaghten, the Envoy.

On January 9th, three Achakzai horsemen arrived with an order from General Elphinstone to quit Jalalabad and march to Peshawur. As Akbar Kkan, who was investing them, had issued proclamations to all the tribes to attack them, Sale refused to budge without further instructions. Up in Kabul the murders, first of Sir Alexander Burnes in his house in the city, and later of the Envoy at a meeting with Afghan chiefs, had thrown the garrison of Kabul into a terrible state.

Commanded by an aged, bedridden General, with the senior officers under him at loggerheads, vacillation and pusillanimity brought a British army to humiliation never before experienced. The authorities at Kabul signed an agreement to withdraw from the country in the height of a snowy winter. The horror and the pity of it come afresh to every one who reads the tale anew. By no writer has it been so powerfully or so pitifully described as by the author of the *Judgment of the Sword*.<sup>1</sup>

Salé, knowing that the Kabul force was expecting to come to Jalalabad, decided that he would wait and unite with them rather than march ahead. It was argued at Jalalabad that a commander who capitulates can only do so for the troops under his immediate orders. While thus thinking and waiting, the end of the tragedy came to pass. One afternoon, January 13th, officers at the gate of Jalalabad saw a solitary horseman advancing on a staggering horse. It was Dr. Brydon, the only survivor of Elphinstone's brigade, which had been cut to pieces and destroyed in the passes: 4,500 British and Indian soldiers, 12,000 followers, and an incubus of women and children beyond compute. They had marched out of Kabul into the bitter snow, and, with the exception of a few prisoners, had perished. To this day even their bones lie unburied in the Khurd Kabul and Jagdallak Passes and were visible to our armies in 1878-80.

Lady Butler has painted the scene and caught the atmosphere. Everyone knows "The Remnant of an Army," poor Brydon in his sheepskin coat and his staggering pony—Brydon, who was to have his full share of stress and strain, for he was later to form part of the original garrison of the Residency at Lucknow. A few years ago, when the author of *The Judgment of the Sword* was writing *The Hero of Herat* it fell to the present writer to accord the concurrence of the Commander-in-Chief in India to her being supplied with copies of certain documents in the Indian Records. The file of records, beautifully arranged, was full of old faded letters. It was as though half the ghosts in India had walked through the room. There was

<sup>1</sup> Maud Diver.

a letter from Lady Sale at Kabul to her husband at Jalalabad to the effect that that "rotten ass Macnaghten had had his throat cut, and if the old fools in Kabul had their way the same would happen to all of them." Lady Sale was something of an old soldier, and had a way of expressing herself frankly. Then there was a letter from MacGregor, the political officer at Jalalabad, to Lawrence or Wild to the effect that "a certain Dr. Brydon had just ridden in wounded and near dead with fatigue and somewhat incoherent, but it would appear that some terrible disaster had occurred," in which guess he was certainly right.

So on January 13th the fat was in the fire. Sir Robert Sale was very much on his own responsibility as the sole representative of British power in Northern Afghanistan, with his wife and daughters in the hands of the enemy or dead in the snow.

In 1888 appeared *The Career of Major George Broadfoot, C.B.*, by Major William Broadfoot, R.E., which revived old controversies, and probably for the first time put the true history of the "Illustrious Garrison" in a clear manner. That garrison was invested and attacked for three months, when it finally took heart of grace, and on April 7th sallied forth and heavily fell on the Afghan army, capturing their guns and raising the siege. A few days later, the avenging army under Pollock, having forced the Khaiber, arrived at Jalalabad to find the garrison free men.

Now the story of how the British troops came to remain at that place is full of psychological interest to those who study military character, and can separate the issues that are before them. The night after Brydon had staggered in, Broadfoot, as garrison engineer, went to Sale and urged that unless he was prepared to defend the place to the last and take full measures therefor, he should retreat that night. Sale, relying on help from Wild, wrote to the Commander-in-Chief in India that he intended to hold out to the last, and urged early relief. A few days later Wild failed in his attempt to force the Khaiber and Sale became appalled at the gravity of the situation. On

January 26th, he and Captain MacGregor summoned a council of war to hear a scheme they had prepared for an evacuation of Jalalabad under convention with the Afghans. It should be said that the news of the disasters had paralysed the Governor-General and his Government at Calcutta, and Sale believed that no one would stir a finger to help them or rescue the prisoners, among whom were most of the English ladies who had been in Kabul.

Broadfoot alone bitterly and violently opposed the proposal, urging a defence to the bitter end. He was at first reproached with his impossible attitude, and the council adjourned. Meeting again, Broadfoot still stood his ground, and soon Oldfield, of the Cavalry, followed by Backhouse, of the Artillery, supported him. The question of giving hostages helped to clinch matters. Eventually Dennie and Abbott came to the same view, and Sale was persuaded at last to yield to the bolder course. Broadfoot at once set to work vigorously on a ditch round the walls, and shortly came news from Peshawur that every effort would be made to come to their assistance. It was due to the strong character of Broadfoot that the council of war determined to adopt that course which redounded so much to their honour and so prominently helped to maintain some remnant of British prestige. The council did not finally dissolve till February 12th, by which time the defences were getting into excellent order. Mayne, the leader of the troop of the 2nd Shah's Horse, had captured a number of sheep and cattle, and the spirits of the force rose considerably.

Sale's attitude at this juncture is specially interesting because it shows him to have been, like so many good soldiers of our own and other armies, excellent as a subordinate leader, but quite unfit for supreme command, and paralysed when called on to assume responsibility and display initiative. Sturdy courage and obedience to instructions is a characteristic of such men, who are among the most reliable assets in an army—so long as their limitations be known. Our history teems with examples of them and their success when subordinate,

and of their failure when supreme. He was, further, by no means a young man, and had already served for two and a half years in the country and taken part in numerous actions. All through the defence he displayed considerable want of initiative, allowing his forage-parties to be driven in every day, to the great detriment of his animal establishment and to the discontent of his officers.

February dragged on, with the news that Lord Ellenborough, the new Governor-General, had arrived, and that Pollock was at Peshawur, but gave no sign. On February 19th occurred the great earthquake. The earth rolled and heaved like the ocean, and the whole of the rebuilt walls and bastions were shattered completely, and, what was perhaps worse, a number of sheep killed. Nothing daunted, however, Broadfoot and his wonderful corps of fighting sappers set to work with the regimental working-parties to rebuild. Happily, the Afghans failed to seize their opportunity. As a matter of fact that failure was due to the extraordinary promptitude with which Broadfoot repaired the apparently appalling disaster to his works. The mud walls at which he had worked so hard lay in heaps! Probably by the next morning the more visible parts were standing again, complete in their front face, so that to the Afghan reconnoiters it appeared that they had never fallen. A miracle had happened! Providence seemed to be on the side of the unbelievers. That alone was enough to destroy the *élan* of the superstitious besiegers. In all Ningrahar and Lughman the walls of Jalalabad alone stood! Well might they say with the Jews on Holy Cross day:

“Thou art the Judge. We are bruised thus.  
But, the Judgment over, join sides with us.”

It was after this loss of sheep that the 35th offered to give up their share of a fresh capture of sheep to the Europeans.

Towards the end of March it was believed that the Afghans were undermining the walls from the shelter of some of the

old enclosures, and a sortie was made in which Broadfoot was severely wounded. All during March, Pollock was at Peshawur, heartening up and re-disciplining the demoralised sepoy of Wild's Brigade, of whom he found 1,800 in hospital. In vain did the garrison look for Pollock's arrival. With the best intention in the world he could not face the forcing of the Khaiber till his European reinforcements came up. At last the garrison took matters into its own hands and sallied forth to attack Akbar Khan. The immediate provocation was the firing of a salute by the latter in honour of a defeat of Pollock, said to have just occurred. The garrison, then and there, demanded to be led against the enemy. It was sick of a passive defence, sick of rarely even being allowed to issue to seize the enemy's flocks which grazed almost within musket-shot of the defences. Sale, who resisted the demand for a sortie, finally gave way. The British emerged from their defences and drove the Afghans from various forts and enclosures, finally capturing Akbar Khan's camp three miles distant from the town and recovering two of the guns lost by Elphinstone's column. Colonel Dennie, commanding the 13th, a stout old fighting man, was killed, and the 13th lost considerably. The garrison thus achieved its own immediate relief and had no difficulty in getting supplies. When, on April 16th, Pollock's force arrived they found a free garrison waiting to receive them, with their bands playing "Oh, but you've been lang a-coming!" with a pretty irony.

From November to April, Sale's force had succeeded in keeping the flag flying, despite the croaking on the part of many that seems so inseparable from any of our ventures in the Afghan hills. Far away on the south, Nott, at Kandahar, had been doing the same, but being away from the hampering control of Macnaghten and Elphinstone he had not felt the evil influence of their folly and their appalling end. It is now universally recognised that to George Broadfoot of all others did the garrison owe the fame that it achieved, though naturally all who had counselled capitulation were only too anxious to forget their share in opposing a policy that had stood them in





FIELD-MARSHAL SIR GEORGE POLLOCK, G.C.B., G.C.S.I.  
(From an engraving by courtesy of A. Pollock, Esq.)



such stead. Sale, of course, received full measure of praise, but it was not grudged to his subordinates, Broadfoot receiving a brevet and a C.B.

The story of the "Illustrious Garrison" is now told, and it is not necessary to follow Pollock in his avenging career, nor the rescue of the prisoners, nor to mourn the loss of Ghuzni, nor rejoice with stout old Nott at Kandahar.

There are many striking sidelights in the history of this war that are still of great interest. It is on record that the 44th Foot had been notorious for the contempt with which it had regarded its comrades, both officers and men, of the Company's Army, and indeed the natives of India generally. It was always on bad terms with its own native establishment, and it was pleased to call the native troops of the Company "black regiments"—which was bad manners and extremely shortsighted. Now the 13th, as we have seen, was on very good terms with natives generally, and the Sepoy army in particular. Bitterly had the 44th reaped the crop it had sown, and cheerfully had the 13th's chickens come home to roost. The same has been noticed often enough in Indian wars, the success that attended the operations of British and Sepoy units when *camaraderie* was rife, and the ill success when it has been conspicuous by its absence. At one time it was the fashion of certain corps to talk of "black regiments." The habit is dead, or almost dead. The intense good feeling that pervaded the relationship between the two services in the Afghan war of 1878-80 killed it for good and all. The World War has thrice emphasized the entente.

An interesting episode of the First Afghan campaign was the display at Ferozepore in 1838, where the army of the Indus met the Sikh army, and Lord Auckland, the then Governor-General, and Rinjhit Singh, reviewed their respective armies. From the officers' diaries that are extant we have references to the European freelances in the service of Rinjhit Singh. These varied from the generals, such as Avitabile, Allard, and Ventura, to the lesser lights who commanded corps, the latter

rather ragamuffin people dressed in the borrowed trappings of Europe. Avitabile, it may be remembered, was governor of Peshawur, just a governor after its own heart, who always had a corpse a-swinging on the open gallows outside the fort, and his own house to show all comers that he understood first principles. Among these gentlemen was Colonel Gardner, the famous *Gordana Sahib*, who, an American,<sup>1</sup> came into India from Central Asia after an exciting period in the Khanates. He ended his life at Jammoo, where he had long been commandant of Ghulab Singh's and Ranbir Singh's artillery, and chief caster of cannon to the State of Kashmir. He could never eat or drink without clamping together the severed sinews of his throat, due to a sword slash, and in his old age always received visitors in a complete suit of the tartan of Cameron of Erracht, in which he was presented to our late King on his visit to Jammoo. His letters from "Brahminy Bull" to "John Bull," at the time of the Mutiny, are models of shrewd comment.

Another interesting incident was the Institution of "The Order of the Durani Empire," an order of Knights and Companions with which Shah Shujah inaugurated his re-ascent of the throne of his fathers, and with which many of the senior soldiers and all the political officers were decorated at Kabul, while the Army scoffed once again. When the Durani Empire proper perished by the sword two years later, the Government of India recalled the decoration from the recipients. Several of them, however, had passed to widows and heirs and are still extant. The badge of the order consisted of a gold Maltese cross with crossed swords between the ends of the cross. The centre consisted of green and blue enamel surrounded by a circle of pearls and the Persian inscription "*Dur-i-Dauran*," "Pearls of the Age," in reference to the supposed derivation of Durani. Tancred's *Historical Record of Medals* contains an engraving of the decoration.

The medals given for the defence of Jalalabad are distinct from those given for the rest of the campaign. The Governor-

<sup>1</sup> Other accounts of a deserter from the Bengal Artillery.

General issued a medal bearing a mural crown on one side and the inscription "*Jellalabd VII April*"<sup>1</sup> on the other. This, however, was disapproved of at Home, and in its place a second issued, having a head of the Queen on the *obverse* and the inscription "*Victoria Vindex*," and an effigy of Victory in the air on the *reverse*. Very few of the recipients returned theirs for exchange, preferring, apparently, the original one. The attribute "*Vindex*" or "Avenger" should be noticed as differing from the original *Regina*. This was common to all the medals for the second phase of the campaign after the Kabul massacres. These two medals, as were all the *Vindex* medals, were worn with a rainbow ribbon, designed by Lord Ellenborough, to represent the rising sun. The triumphal arches at the Ferozepore bridge of boats for Pollock's returning army were decorated with the same colours. This ribbon was revived for the bronze star that commemorated Lord Roberts' famous march from Kabul to Kandahar.

Such in brief is the story of Jalalabad and its "Illustrious Garrison" which kept the flag flying at a time when it so sorely needed support. Alas! so many of its survivors were in due course to die a soldier's death. The two Sikh wars saw the deaths of many, and those who survived mostly fell in 1857. Gallant George Broadfoot fell at Ferozeshah while carrying a message for Lord Harding.<sup>2</sup> Stout old Sir Robert Sale fell at Moodkee. Havelock and Henry Lawrence survived to save India and die at their posts in '57. *Sic transit gloria mundi*.

<sup>1</sup> Jellalabad is now spelt more accurately with an "a."

<sup>2</sup> See p. 129: The Sikh Wars.

## VII

### THE GWALIOR WAR

#### MAHARAJPORE AND PUNNIAR

December 29th, 1843

THOSE who are conversant with the War Medals of the British Army are familiar with two five-pointed bronze stars each with a silver centre on which is inscribed "Maharajpore," or "Punniar" respectively, and which is spoken of generally as the "Gwalior Star." The stars are suspended by a rainbow ribbon, like that of the Afghan medals, known as the "military ribbon of India." But even those familiar with the star know little of the story, so that some account of it may be of interest. That is to say, how two pitched battles at Maharajpore and Punniar came to be fought near Gwalior on the same day twelve miles apart in the heart of British India, so recently as 1843, and what Sir Hugh Gough, Lord Ellenborough, the Governor-General, and the boy Sindiah had to do with it. It came about in this wise. The country was settling down to peace and prosperity after the shock and strain of the wars in Afghanistan. The avenging army under General Pollock had returned from Kabul, with the escaped prisoners, and General Nott's army. The war-stained troops had defiled through the almost openly hostile Punjab, Lord Ellenborough had received them at Ferozepore on a field of the cloth of gold, and men were forgetting the tragedies and recriminations of the episode. The Governor-General was busy at plans for the improved government of the land, and save for the rattle of the sabre in the scabbard in the land of the Five Rivers, which Government could not help hearing, all was peace.

Early in the year, it is true, there had been some desperate fighting in Sind between the old war hound "Charlie Napier" and the Amirs of that land, but under his vigorous and original military government, the newly acquired territories were fast settling down. South of the Sutlej in the great peninsula of Hindostan all was apparent peace, and the British had held undisputed sway for nearly half a century.

On February 7th, 1843, died Junkojee Rao Sindiah, without heir. For forty years, ever since Lake and Wellesley had crushed the French trained armies that De Boigne and Perron had raised for Daulut Rao, the ruler of Gwalior, known always by the title of Sindiah, there had been friendship between the Company's Government and that State. When Junkojee Rao died childless, he left a widow, Tara Bye, aged thirteen. To her, Government accorded the privilege of adopting a relative as heir, after the custom of the Hindus. This, however, failed to secure peace, for there were two claimants for the office of regent. These were the Mama Sahib, or maternal uncle of the late ruler, and Dada Khasjeewala, the State treasurer, generally known, to the delight of the British soldiery, as the Mama and the Dada. Intrigue followed intrigue, and the Governor-General selected the former as regent, while the widow and her faction favoured the Dada. In the redoubled intrigues for which such a situation was so suited, the powerful army delighted to share. This army consisted of 30,000 regular soldiers, horse and foot, and 10,000 light horsemen, with a large park of artillery. It possessed many of the habits, and much of the organisation and tradition of the French and Italian officers of the days of De Boigne, and it was a powerful weapon for evil in bad hands. The rank and file consisted, not of Mahrattas, although they were the ruling race, but of the martial races of Mewat, Rajputana and Oude, the latter that race of hereditary soldiers, who, since the disappearance of the old Hindu kingdoms, had served any master in search of a staunch soldiery.

In the wars of the Marquis Wellesley, the Mahrattas had appealed to the Sikhs, by reason of the common Hinduism of

their faiths, to stand by them against the British, while at the time of Maharajpore, the Sikhs were ever preaching to the Mahrattas the need for joining them in a common cause against the British. With 40,000 turbulent soldiery in the very heart of Hindustan and British India, and the Sikhs spoiling for a fight, there was good enough reason for anxiety in the Government of India, and for the assembly of an army of exercise near Agra, ready to become a field force if need be. The actual trend of events which brought our Government to a pass so foreign to their wishes were briefly as follows. All the rains and autumn the situation had been boiling up. The Dada's party, supported by the army and the Queen Mother, opposed the Mama in every way, the Dada refusing the honourable mission which would have removed him, of taking dead Sindiah's ashes to the Ganges. The Ranee, through the agency of the inevitable clever slave girl, was intriguing also with the troops. This lady the Resident deported, on a pension; but the situation was out of hand, and the Mama knew not how to grasp the nettle danger with the hand courage, and it may be remarked that the Resident's presence must have weakened him, since the Mahratta methods of easing the situation, with the cup, the dagger and the bowstring must have been to a great extent denied him.

The Ranee, suddenly attempted a *coup d'état* and reported to the Resident that she had dismissed the Regent, viz., the Mama. But as the Mama had proved so unfit to rule with the bowdlerised methods at his disposal, the Governor-General did not support him, although it was necessary for the Resident to mark his displeasure at the insult to our nominee, by leaving the Court of Gwalior. The Dada then attempted to take the helm, and rallied to himself all who were disaffected to the English. But the army, grown mutinous and headstrong, became a third and independent factor. The Ranee, now badly frightened, and with no Resident to lean on, prayed the Governor-General to send him back. Lord Ellenborough demanded that the Dada should be handed over to him in custody, which was refused. However, one party did succeed in confining him. He escaped



and, having improved his position by placating the army with money, for the moment became stronger than ever. On November 1st, the Governor-General reviewed the whole situation, which a recent sanguinary revolution and subsequent unrest in the Punjab rendered crucial. He then repaired to Agra, to which place the Resident urged the Ranee to send the Dada to meet him. As, however, there were no signs of his arrival, Lord Ellenborough ordered the advance on Gwalior of Sir Hugh Gough's army of exercise from Agra and Muttra, and also of a force under Sir John Grey who commanded the Division of the Nerbudda, from the direction of Saugor. It was, above all things, necessary to re-establish British authority at Gwalior, for the Mahrattas and the Sikhs together could muster 120,000 regular soldiers, and 500 cannon. The Governor-General announced that the march of the British force would not be stayed till complete order at Gwalior was restored.

The move and this despatch, as may be imagined, caused some consternation at Gwalior, and the now unfortunate Dada was sent in to the British as a prisoner. The Governor-General said, however, that he should advance till he had some guarantee that all disturbance or fear of disturbance was at an end. The Ranee then offered to come to the Governor-General with the young Sindiah, and it was decided to meet them at Hingonah. On December 21st, 1843, the leading British brigade crossed the Chumbal, followed by the Governor-General's camp, and by the 25th the whole of the right wing, viz., the force under Sir Hugh Gough, was concentrated at Hingonah. During all this time the army of exercise had little idea that good fortune could lead to a fight. They were all out for an outing at the most delightful time of the year, practically Christmas week in camp, and there were four ladies with the Governor-General's party, viz., Lady Gough and her youngest daughter, Mrs. Curtis, and the famous Juanita, of Peninsula fame, the wife of Sir Harry Smith—fairly conclusive proof that actual hostilities were not very probable. There is a well-known print of the passage of the Chumbal by the army, drawn by Captain Young,

of the Bengal Engineers. It is a wonderful study of perspective, column after column fording the river, long trains of bullock trackeries, and the twenty yoke of the heavy guns, camels, doolies, staff officers, commissaries, crowding down to the flats below the river cliff. On the opposite bank can be seen the army ascending as it crosses, while downstream more columns are crossing in boats. Except that the heights on the opposite bank are exaggerated, it is no doubt an excellent presentation of the actual scene.

From the 23rd to the 26th, the army was crossing the Chumbal and assembling at Hingonah, where it was expected the Ranee and the young Maharajah would meet the Governor-General, who had accompanied the army. By the 25th, however, it was known that the Mahratta army, now entirely out of hand, would not allow the Ranee to come, and it was decided to advance on Gwalior. Orders were sent to Sir John Grey, who had been assembling his force at Jhansi and Koonch, to cross the Sinde and move on that place. It was now reported that the Gwalior army had advanced from the capital to meet the British, and communication with Sir John Grey was interrupted before any acknowledgment of the orders to advance could be received. Sir Hugh Gough has been criticised for his plans in dividing his army and thereby exposing either wing to the full weight of the enemy's concentrated forces. The Commander-in-Chief, however, always stated that he recognised the possible danger, but that the other advantages and the military value of the enemy, had decided him to disregard it. In war it is permissible to break some of the simple strategical rules if you know the dangers you incur, and are ready to counteract them. In this case Sir Hugh Gough admitted that he had much under-rated the fighting value of the enemy, who put up a most disciplined and determined fight, without, however, any power of manœuvre.

The Governor-General decided to move forward from Hingonah, and on December 28th, Sir Hugh Gough with his divisional and brigade commanders, suitably escorted, rode

forward to view the ground, and his quartermaster-general, Colonel Garden, executed a military reconnoissance. The Mahratta army was found to be drawn up on the near bank of the river Ahsin, a stream whose banks were intersected with steep ravines on either side. The Mahratta strength was not known, but Sir Harry Smith writes that in this reconnoissance he saw lines of contiguous columns.

It will now be as well to understand the order of battle, an old expression from the French, still in use, which means the detail of the forces engaged. Unfortunately we have not the Mahratta order of battle. The names of the regiments would be interesting and give some trace of De Boigne, who founded the army. Colonels Baptiste and Jacobs, till recently commanding, had with the other Europeans and Eurasians left the Mahrattas owing to their attitude towards the paramount power, and no doubt to the open hostility to the Christian which probably prevailed. We do not know if there were any such left in the opposing force, though we may be sure there were the usual barrack room yarns of deserters in the ranks. The Mahratta regiments had no doubt names similar to those in use among the Sikhs, and surviving to this day in the Kashmir army, which still show the traces of the old adventurers, who trained forces for the Indian States—the “Regiment of Victory,” the “Lightning Battery,” the “Gurkhas of the Sun,” and such like.

The order of the battle of the mainwing of the “Angrez”—as the English are to this day called in the Indian States, was composed as follows:

The Right Wing (the force under the personal command of Sir Hugh Gough).

CAVALRY DIVISION—SIR JOSEPH THACKWELL

*3rd Brigade* (Brigadier Cureton), 16th Lancers, 1st Bengal Light Cavalry, 4th Irregular Cavalry, The Governor-General's Body Guard, Lane's and Alexander's Troops of Bengal Horse Artillery, under Brigadier Gordon. *Scott's Brigade*—4th Bengal Light Cavalry, 10th Bengal Light Cavalry, Grant's Troop of Horse Artillery. *3rd Infantry Brigade* (Major-General Valliant).

## 2ND DIVISION—MAJOR-GENERAL DENNIS

*4th Infantry Brigade* (Brigadier Stacy), 14th Bengal Native Infantry, 31st Bengal Native Infantry, 43rd Bengal Light Infantry, with Browne's Field Battery (17th).

## 3RD DIVISION—MAJOR-GENERAL LITTLER

*5th Infantry Brigade* (Brigadier Wright), 39th Foot, 56th Bengal Native Infantry, with Saunders' Field Battery (10th).

The Khelat-i-Ghilzai Regiment, and the 2nd Skinner's Horse also formed part of the force.

It will be noticed how loosely the term division was applied, even to bodies consisting only of a weak infantry brigade, and a couple of batteries.

After the reconnaissance of the 28th, the whole of Sir Hugh Gough's force marched in the early hours of the 29th across the ravines in front of Hingonah, to a rendezvous opposite the Mahratta position. When the hour came to advance the force was drawn up as follows: From right to left, Cureton's cavalry brigade, Valliant's infantry brigade, Dennis' division, and close in rear Littler's division and Scott's cavalry brigade. Sir Harry Smith wrote that this night march of approach was excellently carried out, and as he was an old staff officer of the Light Division, and very critical of bad staff work, we may be sure this was so. A night march over nullahs such as those in front of Hingonah was no easy matter.

Soon after daylight the line advanced, the ladies riding on elephants near the leading columns, probably because anywhere in rear was in danger of incursions from the Mahratta horse. Suddenly a hot artillery fire was opened from the village of Maharajpore. It was the fashion to say in the army that the Commander-in-Chief was surprised. This he always denied, saying that he had expected Maharajpore to be held by an outpost, though not by the whole Mahratta army. In the night the enemy had moved up their line and their guns from Chunda village and the line of the River Ahsin, to the village of Maharajpore, and those adjacent. The British line halted

while a hasty fresh reconnaissance was made. The country in front of Maharajpore was covered with standing crops five to six feet high, and it was impossible to see far ahead. Lord Ellenborough, writing to the Duke of Wellington, says: "Batteries kept getting up literally like coveys of partridges." The Mahratta artillery kept opening a heavy fire from unexpected quarters.

Littler's division was ordered to advance straight on Maharajpore, Wright's Infantry brigade, consisting of the 39th Queen's, and the 56th Bengal Native Infantry to storm the batteries there, Valliant's brigade to move on the right of Wright, and sweep round in rear, Cureton's Cavalry to prolong the turning movement. We are told that the 56th N.I. hung back, and did not keep up with the 39th Foot, and that the Commander-in-Chief, cried, "Will no one get that Sepoy regiment on," and how Havelock rode up and asked its name, and when told the 56th said, "No, no, its old name," and that he was told "*Lambourne ki pultan*."<sup>1</sup> Whereon he called to the *Lambourne ki pultan* to advance and preserve their name, which they then did readily enough.

If the officers could not get their men on, he was no doubt justified, but it sounds more than tiresome of him. It may be remembered that his son did much the same to a British regiment in the Mutiny, during the advance to Cawnpore, thereby raising a controversy which lasts to this day. Since, however, the 56th blew up in the Great Mutiny, and were among the Cawnpore Mutineers, they have no credit left to defend. At any rate it may be remarked that it is as ill for an outsider to come between officers and their men, unless he be a general-in-command, as it is to interfere between man and wife. It was urged that the regiment lost ground by halting to take off their knapsacks.

Be that as it may, the batteries at Maharajpore were stormed, in the teeth of a hail of grape, old horse shoes and any scrap iron with which the Mahrattas could cram their guns. The gunners fought and were bayoneted at their guns, and the brigade swept on towards the Ahsin. General Valliant's brigade,

<sup>1</sup> Lambourne's Regiment.

which had turned Maharajpore from the right, then wheeled to the left, and swept on past the rear of that village against Shikarpore, another defended hamlet. The 39th Queen's lost 30 killed and 196 wounded in thus storming the guns. It is a noticeable thing how the Eastern gunners, the *gholandaz* (hurlers of balls) have always died at their guns. Here, and in the Sikh Wars, as in the older wars, the artillerymen have fought till the bayonets closed on them, and the same spirit animated the mutineer gunners of our own artillery. The gun, absorbing as it does the interest of its crew, has a curious psychological effect. Zola, in his *Débâcle*, dwells on the discipline that the French artillery retained in 1870 when the rest was chaos. So the artillerymen in the Maharajpore trenches died at their guns, and the British brigade swept on to the positions in rear, and the whole army of Gwalior after a stout resistance broke and fled incontinently. Cureton's cavalry brigade manœuvring wide on the right should have accounted for many, had it not been brought up short by an impassable nullah, behind which a powerful Mahratta battery rained round shot on them, till the brigade drew off. The batteries at Maharajpore were tackled by "Charley Grant *Sahib*," who galloped his light horse artillery guns in, through the standing corn to a range at which his metal could compete. It was the 2nd/3rd troop of Bengal Horse Artillery in the high crested helmets of that arm. The rest of the horse artillery was away on the right with Cureton, viz., Lane's and Alexander's troops under Brigadier Gordon. The recently revived rank of brigadier we see in use at this period. It was then applied to any officer under the rank of brigadier-general, who was in command of a body of troops consisting of one or more units. The officer commanding a station was "the brigadier," and, to this day in the unchanging East, the station staff officer is the *brigad duftar*.

The various events as the different brigades flung themselves on Mahratta batteries with their said vomit of case shot, scrap iron and old horse shoes, are but sparsely recorded. That they must have been numerous and exciting we may assume



[From a painting by Captain Young, Bengal Engineers.

THE PASSAGE OF THE CHUMBAL, BY THE BRITISH INDIAN ARMY EN ROUTE TO GWALIOR IN 1843.

SIR HUGH GOUGH AND STAFF IN THE FOREGROUND  
(v.p. 98)





from the tally of killed and wounded. These totalled 790, including 6 officers and 100 men killed, and 34 officers, and 650 men wounded, very largely by cannon shot and grape. The two Queen's battalions present, the 39th and 40th Foot, lost 24 killed and 160 wounded, and 30 killed and 196 wounded respectively. The 16th Grenadiers of the Bengal Line were especially distinguished with 169 casualties. The cavalry losses were considerably less, though they lost many horses, presumably from round shot.

Among the minor items young Luther Vaughan wrote that the Mahratta guns were painted blue and red, and records that the hospitals were a specially gruesome sight, chiefly owing, no doubt, to the round shot casualties. It is only from various memoirs and reminiscences that the events and items of the campaign can be culled.

Before outlining the subsequent events, we may turn to the fortunes of Sir John Grey, advancing from the south. The Commander-in-Chief's orders had been safely received, and the Sind River duly crossed. Sir John Grey's force consisted of the regular troops from Bundelcund, and the small existing contingent maintained by the State of Gwalior under treaty, and officered from the Company's army. It had been decided to avoid the difficult defile of the Antrim Ghat, and to advance past the fort of Himmutghar, which, however, contrary to belief, did actually command the proposed route. Fortunately the Mahrattas did not hold this fort, and Sir John Grey marched on unimpeded till he came to another army, drawn up in position at Punniar.

Sir John Grey's wing of the army consisted of H.M. 9th Lancers, the 8th Bengal Light Cavalry, the Buffs and the 50th Foot, and the 39th, 50th and 58th Bengal Native Infantry regiments. Of these latter defunct corps, the 50th has retained a faint grip on men's memory because at Nagode, in Bundelcund, it elected to mutiny after the fall of Delhi, and therefore after mutiny could no longer promise success. The story of Punniar is but briefly recorded. Like the battle of Maharajpore, and those of the Sikh wars, it had now become the custom to rely apparently on the mass of Sepoy redcoats, as but an awe-

inspiring setting, chiefly because of the colour of their coats, and to hurl the Europeans straight at the hostile guns—a simple but deadly game. Simple because the guns were taken, deadly because they would belch much grape and canister before the surviving bayonets could get at the gunners. These bayonets rarely failed. It was better to die perhaps at the cannon's mouth than to rot in Kurnal, for those were the days of bad barracks and much rum. So great was the confidence of the old British line and the company's artillery in themselves, British generals in India were wont to call for their horse artillery troop and their British infantry to carry the serried line of heavy hostile guns. It needed little science and took little time. The British battalion of those days stood 1,200 strong in their shakos and white crossbelts, and recked little of heaven or hell. The English soldier of those days was fostered in his huge contempt for the natives. In the Bengal Horse Artillery, the saddled horses would be brought to the barrack plinth, whence without so much as bending knee, the Irish gunner stepped into the saddle and looked down with contempt on all around—Irish, because, if you study the battle graves and the cholera monuments you will notice that all the English army of those days seemed to have Irish names. Whether that be only a coincidence or not, at any rate the British soldier had a fine fostered opinion of himself that made him very terrible under conditions that he understood. A long line of belching guns the other side of a cornfield was one of these conditions.

So in accordance with the tradition of the day the Buffs and the 50th, with such Sepoy corps as could keep up went *ὡς τὰχιστα* into and over the batteries at Punnar and drove the Mahratta right wing to the four winds of heaven. Incidentally they had 35 officers and men killed and 182 wounded, and continued their march to unite with the Commander-in-Chief, all of which is recorded in no special history, but may be gathered in the biographies of the chief actors, and in the regimental histories, and no doubt in correct descriptive, if dull, phraseology, in the despatches of the commanders.

From the 30th to New Year's Day Sir Hugh Gough and his wing halted near the battlefield. On the 2nd he marched on toward the rock of Gwalior, that huge pile of rock and fortification that rises out of the plain like a three decker on the ocean. Jamrud rises out of the plain near the mouth of the Khaiber like a modern battleship, grim and squat, but the Rock of Gwalior stands to the four winds like a 74 of the line. The right wing of the army reached the Mahratta capital on the 3rd and Sir John Grey's force entered it on the 4th, but without any more fighting or signs of hostility. The Ranee and the boy Sindiah had duly met the Governor-General and his victorious army, and all went smoothly. The beaten army lay scattered, but not dispersed, and after the manner of the English, were promptly enlisted into the new contingent, to be commanded by British officers, and expanded from the small existing one. Then as the beaten army heard that not only were arrears of pay being issued, but new and attractive employment offered, it laid down its arms and flocked for pay and service. Lord Ellenborough,<sup>1</sup> writing from Gwalior to the Duke of Wellington, says that the officers raising the corps were well satisfied with the material offering.

The Government acted with great moderation. The boy Sindiah remained on his throne with satisfactory arrangements for his minority and tutelage, and within a month the armies had tramped away, horse, foot, and artillery to their summer quarters in the big cantonments, Meerut, Delhi, Kurnal, Saharanpur, Saugor and the like.

It is well to remember the immense relief to the Government of India that this breaking of the Gwalior army afforded. Ever since the death of Runjhith Singh, Sikh animosity had been increasing, fomented by the satisfaction that our Afghan misfortunes had called forth. "So these English are not invincible after all," had been the feeling throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan. It was natural enough, and with the great organised Sikh army and its powerful artillery

<sup>1</sup> *The Indian Administration of Lord Ellenborough.*

added to the Mahratta army in our very midst, the longer heads, among them that of Henry Lawrence, had something to shake over. The Sikh was not much of a Hindu, but quite enough of one to respond to the vibration of a religious chord, that dwelt on an anti-English combination. After the Mahratta wars of 1803-05, just described, when Lord Lake had crushed the French armies of Sindiah, Holkar, driven from Delhi and the Doab, had flown north to preach combination to the Sikhs, who did once actually advance to join against us. A combination between Sikh and Mahratta had therefore long lain among the skeletons in the cupboard, and Lord Ellenborough and his council must indeed have been glad to see it buried deep in the trenches at Maharajpore.

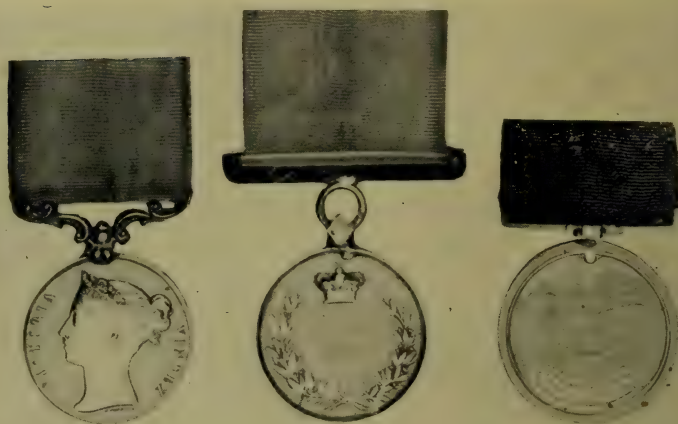
As regards the controversies of the battles, there is little to be said. Lord Ellenborough writing to the Duke, the Duke in reply, and Sir Hugh Gough also, allude more than once to the evil misrepresentations of the British Indian Press, and to the fact that every regiment and battery kept a Press correspondent who criticised and abused with very little knowledge of what had gone on, and still less judgment. One subaltern of horse artillery was removed from his battery for his letters to the press, thus losing his jacket. If we wish to criticise at this distance, we must remember that neither generals nor staffs were trained to the conduct and routine of war, as they now are, and that manœuvres were of rare occurrence. We could not in these days find that the enemy had changed their position by coming unexpectedly on the new line, as happened at Maharajpore, or at any rate, be disconcerted thereby. We may perhaps criticise, as Sir Harry Smith did, in this and in the Sutlej campaign, the sledge-hammer methods, which hurled the European troops at the batteries, regardless of loss, and without military skill. Sir Harry was trained on the staff of the Light Division in the Peninsula, of which the Duke said that it was the only division he had that could fight a battle and yet be fit to go on again the next day. The others hurled themselves unskilfully on the enemy and won with heavy loss, while the





The two Stars for the Gwalior Campaign and the Medal for the Conquest of Sind. (This copy has both "Mecance" and "Hyderabad" on the Reverse indicating that the recipient was present at both battles.)

THE WAR MEDALS OF INDIA. II.



1

2

3

1. The obverse of the "Vindex" Medal 1842
2. The "Vindex" Medal, reverse, "Cabool 1842"
3. The Ghuznee Medal 1839

THE AFGHAN WAR MEDALS, 1839-42

Light Division did it always with little loss. At Aliwal Sir Harry Smith was able to put his principles into practice, and win a handsome victory at little cost.

The armies of those days fought in the winter in their full dress, shakos, coatee, white cross-belts. Sepoys dressed like the British Line, the Lancers wore their high caps and dress accoutrements, and the Bengal Light Cavalry were dressed like light dragoons. Their baggage was absurd. Lord Ellenborough in his letters to the Duke of Wellington complained that all the furniture of a bungalow went into the field. He says that 5,000 hackeries accompanied Sir John Grey's force. It may be remembered that there has been much discussion as to which of the many claimants possessed the actual mess table of H.M. 24th Foot, on which were laid out after Chillianwallah the bodies of the officers of the regiment killed there. The number of bodies was very great, and that mess table must itself have required two hackeries to carry it. The Army was unconscionable in the baggage it took, and no one had the strength of character to draw up a light war scale, and see that it was obeyed. A good deal of our troubles in the first Afghan War were due to a similar cause.

Such in outline was the Gwalior campaign of 1843, and "what it was all about," and we should always remember that without it, the results of the earlier almost drawn battles of the 1st Sikh wars two years later would certainly have brought the Gwalior army on our flanks and rear, across the centre of our communications. It is curious how little the campaign is known and written of, so that a succinct account is hard to find, and the local colour still harder to light on. From the captured guns were made the bronze stars referred to for those who shared in the battles. These stars were originally issued with a hook at the back to fasten on the coat, but later were hung like medals, with the rainbow ribbon, originally designed by Lord Ellenborough for the medals for the Afghan War, to represent the rising sun, and also used with the Sind medals for the battles of Meanee and Hyderabad.

## VIII

### THE CONQUEST OF SIND, 1843

Early History of Sind.  
The First Afghan War.  
Sir Charles Napier.  
The Withdrawal from Afghanistan.  
The Ameers and the treaty.  
The Battle of Meanee.  
The Battle of Dubba or Hyderabad.

THE Conquest of Sind is perhaps the most important step in completing the prosperity of a United India that the British ever took, opening up the mighty rivers to Free Trade, and producing the status which finishes with the spreading of the water of the Indus on millions of arid acres in the great irrigation barrage of Sukkur which Lord Willingdon opened in 1931. It was only a conquest in that it rejoined to India what the Afghans had taken, and a land which had been but little more than a generation in the hands of as wild and ruthless conquerors from the hills as ever harried a peaceful people. Its conquest, however, involved a strange controversy between two famous public servants in which great interest still lies, and it therefore needs treating more as a historical presentment than as a vignette of derringdo. It is a story not very easy to follow, and one that has been grossly misrepresented by the Press of Bombay at that period.

#### EARLY HISTORY OF SIND

To view the question of Sind in correct perspective we must first of all revert to the days of the Mogul Empire before Nadir



Shah, the Persian Turk, invaded India and cut off therefrom the northern provinces, viz. Afghanistan as we now know it, and the various provinces of the Indus. In 1748 Nadir Shah, otherwise known by his assumed title of Nadir Khan Quli, the Slave of Destiny, was murdered and the Durani Empire of Ahmad Shah Abdalli commenced. Sind, the great fluvial province of the lower Indus, was a pure Indian province, largely inhabited by people analogous to the Jāts of the Punjab and the Jāts of the neighbourhood of Delhi. It had not undergone the centuries of colonization by Mongol, Turk and Afghan as had the upper provinces of the Indus, for the routes from Central Asia converged on various points higher up at or near the Indus, from Multan northwards. In the eighth century there had been an Arab conquest of Sind and an Arab kingdom founded from Basra, about the time of the Saxon move to England, but this, while introducing Islam long before the faith of the Prophet had reached the rest of India, had faded away as the Arab Empire dwindled in power. It is now but marked by the striking similarity existing between that hardy race of sailors, the men who sail the great vessels up the Indus, and those who follow a similar vocation on the Tigris. As the Shatt-el-Arab came to the Sind in the eighth century, so in the twentieth the Sind came to the Shatt, for time is in no hurry to make its adjustments.

In the days of Aurungzebe, the last of the Great Moguls who was great, Sind, which is but the Indian name for the Indus, was a province of Delhi, populated by an exceedingly industrious peasantry, who dwelt within reach of such inundation canals as their skill could take off the Indus in its flood season, waiting patiently for more water, as indeed does all India. Now at last they are to see what countless generations have dreamed of, the spreading of the surplus water of the Indus and the Punjab over their lands. In a year or so from now, the completion of the great barrage at Sukkur, will put many millions of acres under wheat and bring wealth and land that is now desert to several million peasantry, so hard and so impious is the rule of the British that succeeded to King Sword and Queen Famine. But

that, too, is but by the way, save that "old Peccavi," the nickname borne of *Punch's* mot, "*Peccavi*" (I have Sind) dreamed it all, as he carried out the behests of the great and good Lord Ellenborough.

When Ahmad Shah founded his Afghan Empire from the derelict Mogul provinces across the Indus, Sind was one of them. After the manner of the East, nay of the world, patient peasants have overlords, barons who strive with one another, and reap the guerdon of rent and cess where they sow not. Sometimes they earn that cess by offering protection, which is the sole right that has any justification, often they earn it not at all. The peasantry watch the come and go of barons, Norman and Saxon or Dane, Mogul or Turk and Afghan, and turn the plough deeper in the sod, and pray that new master will not be more unreasonable than old master. And the great kings higher up in the scale care not, save only Akbar the Great, who it be and how the peasantry are treated, so long as they get their share of the revenue and their meed of military service.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century when the Moguls were struggling with Persia for Kandahar and Lower Sind, the overlordship of Sind had fallen to a fanatical family from Persia, the Kalloras, and in 1778 the Kalloras were ousted by a Belooch tribe and family, the Talpoors, who divided the country among them into chieftaincies and were confirmed in their seizure by the Durani power which claimed the Empire in which Sind lay. When the original Talpoor chief died in 1880 his four brothers, known as the *Char Yar*, divided the power, calling themselves the Ameers of Sind, in which the headship of the State remained with the eldest surviving brother. The Ameers of Hyderabad and Mirpur were the Lords of Lower Sind, and the Ameer of Kairpur Lord of Upper Sind, but the Ameer of Hyderabad was recognized as having some accepted authority over all. When the Durani Empire crumbled, and the Barakzai Viziers seized the power from the family of Ahmad Shah, the Belooch chiefs of Sind all tried to throw off their allegiance to Kabul.

Afghanistan broke into several independent chiefships also. But in all these temporary fissures two historical and indeed geographical truths remained. Sind was either a province of India or of Afghanistan, and the little pots could not hope to swim long alone in the stream. When the attention of the British was drawn to the threats of first Napoleon and the Tsar, and then in William the Fourth's reign, of the Russian advance among the Central Asian Khanates, the first conception of a barrier between India and Russia took the form of an outer and an inner layer of states. The inner layer were to be Lahore, Bhawalpur and Sind, the outer layer, Kabul, Herat and Persia, and if possible by alliance and agreement the unabsorbed trans-Oxus Khanates.

When Shah Shujah, the exiled and ineffective but rightful monarch of Afghanistan, first tried to regain the throne he did so, both in 1818 and again in 1834, *via* Sind and Shikarpur. The Ameers of Sind then attacked him and were defeated, paying him five lakhs of rupees to get rid of him, which was nominally arrears of tribute to Kabul.

By this time Great Britain as a trading power was immensely interested in the navigation of the Indus, a mighty waterway well covered with craft, and in the safe navigation of which British India, with a station at Ferozepore, was now intimately concerned. The interests of the whole world were involved and interference with trade on the river was a fruitful matter for quarrel between Runjhith Singh at Lahore and the Ameers of Sind. It was obviously essential that the question of transit, transit dues, and the equitable satisfaction of any just rights in dues, should be amicably settled. At the beginning of the 'thirties Colonel Pottinger had been sent to Sind to open up some *modus vivendi* and to represent the Company. Further, Runjhith Singh, who had absorbed all the other Afghan districts on the Indus, was quite prepared to conquer Sind and the Ameers were equally anxious to save themselves. What the British wanted was peace and order and reasonableness along the whole Indus and at this period they had not the slightest

desire to annex the Punjab or Sind. These happenings were but thrust on them by fate. But it must always be remembered that Great Britain as the *de facto*, and in a certain sense the legal, successor to the broken Mogul power, had the right of supremacy and influence in all the provinces that had broken off the parent stem in the long process of degradation through which the Empire had passed.

### THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR

The history of the Conquest of Sind is directly connected with the story of the attempt to restore the Durani power in Afghanistan which drifted into the First Afghan War. When, in 1837, the long series of disturbances on the Afghan border that were so disastrous to trade, induced us to try and solve the Central Asian problem on broad and generous lines, we decided to restore the Shah *via* his former province of Sind. The events that led thereto have already been outlined in the story of the "Illustrious Garrison." As part of those events we had required from the Ameers an agreement to our passage of their territory from both north and south for our own and the Shah's troops and the temporary rendition into our hands of the great fortress of Bhakkar which dominated the world's highway, the great crossing of the Indus in Sind. Now this treaty which, however immediately forceful, was but the rightful demand of a paramount power, was not unaccompanied by many advantages pecuniary and otherwise. Had those princes chosen to abide by their engagements and be reasonably attentive to the advice and suggestions of the British Resident Sind would have remained independent if tributary, exactly as their neighbour the Khan of Bhawalpur has remained to this day. In pursuit of the treaty made in 1838, the Army of the Indus, joined by the Bombay Army at Sukkur, moved into Afghanistan. During the vicissitudes of that war, a British force garrisoned Kurrachee and held a cantonment at Sukkur. By the skill of the political officers the Ameers and their wild

gatherings of tribesman retainers, Afghan mercenaries and the like, were prevented from joining in the wild uprisings against the British. But Colonel England, who commanded in Sind, had got himself into an entirely unnecessary and disgraceful reverse at Haikalzai beyond Quetta in an attempt to take supplies through to Nott in Kandahar.

It was considered necessary to put the affairs in Sind in strong hands when Nott marched to Kabul, and the ineffective England was charged with evacuating the residue of Nott's forces from Kandahar. It is from this period that dates the whole story of the conquest of Sind.

### SIR CHARLES NAPIER

Sir Charles Napier was one of the most distinguished soldiers of the period and indeed of British history, but this distinction had come on him unsought when, past sixty years of age, much shattered in youth by severe wounds in the Peninsula, he had been made a major-general by the brevet of 1837. Prior to that he had spent many enthusiastic years developing Ceph-*alonia*, the chief of the Ionian Islands of which he had been governor, and immediately before his sailing for India had been specially concerned in the handling of Chartist riots in the north of England, where his sympathetic yet commonsense action had got the Government of the day neatly out of very unhappy troubles. Then Lord Hill, the Commander-in-Chief, offered him a command in India, and he found himself in 1841 commanding the Poona Division. The position in Afghanistan, which soon merged into the massacres of the Kabul brigade, the equally pitiful surrender of Ghuzni, and the defiant leaguer of Jalalabad, was on everyone's lips in India. The tails of the Army were down, not only because of disaster, but owing to the way in which efficient officers were shepherded to that disaster owing to the astounding political system in force in Afghanistan. The first task Napier set himself was to kill the view that was being bandied about as an excuse for some of our

troubles, that the matchlock was a superior weapon to the musket. Having some more knowledge of musketry than most officers of the day, he was well qualified to carry out experiments, which conclusively proved to the Bombay troops that they had the superior weapon, and he explained that the impression of a superior range was due not to the weapon but to the fact that it was nearly always fired from heights on our folk below or engaged in escalade.

Then came the chance that the ambitious old soldier had been waiting for since the days of the Peninsula. And it is to be remembered that he was the son of an extremely able mother who was also the great-great-grand-daughter of no less a character than Charles II, while his brother General Sir William Napier and cousin Admiral Sir Charles Napier were equally distinguished. Lord Ellenborough had succeeded to the tired and vacillating Lord Auckland, weary of his own policy and the failure that had resulted from it. The new Governor-General had realized how the system of political control in times of danger had produced the situation that had ended in such humiliation, and he was putting a stop to it. In his opinion, also, the Ameers of Sind were endeavouring in every way to cozen the British and evade their obligations to them. He therefore appointed Sir Charles Napier to the command in Sind and to the chief political power. Major Outram, a most distinguished officer of the Bombay Army, long known for his successful and humane dealings with wild tribes and famous as a shikari, had been political agent for some time and had brought the Ameers without outbreak through the extremely difficult times of the Kabul disasters. He had also distinguished himself greatly in the earlier part of the Afghan War. He was in some disfavour with the new Governor-General over the matter of an unfortunate young political officer who had been accused of causing the ambushade of Colonel England's column. This column had walked with its eyes shut up an entrenched valley held by the enemy. But at that time so emasculated was the military enterprise of portions of the Army that it could not

attend to its own information and everyday safety. Outram had protested that the young political was not the Army's nursemaid. Incidentally the lad had died of his wounds raving. Napier was full of sympathy and asked that Outram might remain with him as his principal assistant for his political responsibilities. He had also paid great tribute in public to Outram's services and well-known attributes, so that they started off well together.

Napier arrived in Sind in September, 1842. Except for the garrison at the small port of Kurrachee, the troops that Napier was to command were in Upper Sind at Sukkur, but the major portion of his force did not materialize till England returned from Kandahar, when Napier was to canton them at Sukkur and send the Bengal troops back to the Punjab, which would leave him at most 12,000 men. In the meantime he was to use such troops as he had, to support the return of England and keep off the Belooch hill tribes from the latter. Outram himself, the chief political, was up sweetening the tribes in the Quetta neighbourhood to let the withdrawing troops alone. That withdrawal following on the victorious reunion of the southern and northern British forces at Kabul, was looked upon as a sad confession of ultimate weakness.

#### THE WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

General England, as he now was, had no great reputation, for Haikalzai and other ineptitudes were in most men's mouths, but when his force eventually straggled down from the passes, Napier, thinking that he had been misjudged, wrote him a very handsome letter of congratulation. Later when he saw the miserable want of order and system prevailing, so that his whole force could have been easily destroyed, he was very indignant, especially at the way the wounded from Haikalzai were brought down and the way that officers were caring for their men. He arrived at Sukkur by steamer at the end of September, having ordered the officer commanding there to move out to cover

England's columns from the hills, and then met Outram for the first time. The two men of action took an immediate fancy to one another, which lasted for some little while; Outram proceeding shortly on furlough only to come back almost at once as Civil Commissioner to Sir Charles.

The Bengal troops were to march away, much to Napier's relief, as he described the feeling between them and the Bombay troops as extraordinarily bad. Then he sat down to get his men under cover at Sukkur before the next summer and generally to reorganize the area and settle the political system, as the Governor-General, in his unthinking way, had abolished the whole establishment by a stroke of the pen. The Governor-General was determined to settle the Sind business once and for all and now offered Napier General Nott's troops when they returned down the Indus as they would on emerging from the Khaiber. This, however, he did not want. What he did want was cavalry, and authority to expand the Irregular Horse now being worked to death under the young Bombay Gunner, Captain Jacob. He received eventually two regular regiments, the 9th Bengal and the Poona Horse.

With the evacuation of the remnant of Nott's force from Kandahar and the rolling up of the posts through the Bolan and Kach-Gundava the Afghan campaign and Sir Charles' connection therewith was at an end, and the aftermath thereto in Sind was about to ensue.

### THE AMEERS AND THE TREATY

The treaty which the Ameers of Sind were compelled to make with the British and Shah Shujah has been referred to. Whether it was fair or unfair is a controversy which has long since passed. It can now, as we know it after the lapse of years, only be called unfair if we consider the whole British venture or fate in the East unfair. Lord Ellenborough considered that the Ameers, reading from Outram's reports, had endeavoured to evade it at every turn. He now sent very definite orders to Napier to see it



strictly observed, and ere long propounded an amended one which the Ameers must accept. Sir Charles thought the original treaty an undue interference with the Ameers, but that they, who were notoriously the worst rulers and cruellest oppressors of a peaceful and unwarlike peasantry in India, would be infinitely richer and their people much happier if it had been scrupulously observed. It is to be remembered that they themselves in the lifetime of the oldest of them had seized the rule, assisted by the hill Beloochees, and maintained their position with the help of hordes of tribesmen and mercenaries, both Afghan and Belooch. They had given lands and villages to be the prey of their followers and cared nought for the Sindian, whom they even prevented from making what they could from trading and agriculture, by the ignorance and oppression of their rule.

To Outram, who had handled them through the difficulties of the Afghan trouble, they were picturesque chiefs for whom in some ways he had sympathy and affection, and to whom he had in the handling of them, given all sorts of assurances. He, like Henry Lawrence, dreamed and aimed more at making chiefs and barons better, than at getting rid of them. But there was no doubt that they had at their call immense numbers of well-armed men, both the hill Belooch, from their own plantations of barons and followers, and from hordes of Afghans and other wild adventurers who would flock to their call. For the Ameers had immense personal wealth squeezed from the rich Indus traffic on which they sat, and from their peasantry.

To enforce the existing treaties, to enquire into the more deliberate evasions, especially in the matter of fluvial trade to the Punjab and the dues arising, and to see the new ones signed was the task of Sir Charles Napier. Shilly-shally, intrigue and evasion were not unnaturally the order of the day. Outram thought the Ameers would sign and give guarantees, but Napier and his staff knew well how the army had perished at the hands of political optimism and misjudgment, and the Afghan suspicion and atmosphere was ever present in their minds. They were not prepared to accept the political view and intelligence as

correct. They believed that Outram was entirely misled by his own *jasus*<sup>1</sup> and agents, that the Ameers were conspiring to fight and were assembling immense forces. This, especially the assembling of forces, Outram denied. Unfortunately, but happily for the country, Napier was right, for the Ameers had collected 50,000 to 60,000 well-armed and very warlike followers. Napier decided that as the Governor-General's wishes were being deliberately evaded, and as the Ameers were not out to settle peaceably, he would march on Hyderabad, the centre of the trouble, where Outram himself had a residence, in the hope that his approach with his force would induce them to be more reasonable. The old treaty and the new, while bringing the Ameers into control, were greatly to their real advantage, and also a necessity of modern life on the rivers.

Sir Charles Napier was every inch a soldier and a regimental soldier. He had very soon pulled the draggled forces that had come down the passes into order. The troops were now alert and well-disciplined, with their tails curling over their heads in a way that they had not curled for several years. Their Chief had, moreover, taken their fancy. But the winter of 1842-43 was passing and a Sindian winter passes to a Sindian summer and heat unbelievable, in a very short time. Napier was not going to let negotiations, which he believed spurious, drag on till the heat forbade his troops taking the field.

The Ameer of Upper Sind had his capital at Khairpur, not far from Sukkur. He was Rustum, a very old man, a survivor of the seizure of Sind from the Kalloras. His son was intriguing to get the old man to abdicate in his favour, whereas the succession by right and custom must go to his eldest uncle, Ali Murad. Eventually Rustum did put himself in Ali Murad's hands and Napier recognized the latter as Ameer of Upper Sind. The sons of Rustum and other brothers took their troops out, and some actually moved to the famous desert retreat, the huge fortress of Emamgarh, where they had always been inaccessible in time of trouble. Napier felt that he must kill the idea of

<sup>1</sup> Spies.

inaccessibility once and for all, and moved out on December 26th with his force or as much as he could get camels for to the edge of the desert at Deejee, thirty miles, and there left the bulk while he moved 350 of the 22nd Foot on camels, two 24-p. howitzers with double teams of camels, and 150 of the Scinde Horse. Pushing over heavy sand with very little water they arrived at Tugul on the absolute edge of the desert, forty miles from Deejee, and thence sixty miles more to Emamgarh, where he arrived on the 12th of January, 1843, carrying his water as well as his food.

The birds had flown, astounded at the British enterprise, whereon Napier used 10,000 lbs. of powder found in the fort in blowing up the stronghold, which he considered rightly enough a quite unnecessary appanage of Amirdom. He then marched back to Pir Abu Bakr on the road from Sukkur to Hyderabad, and forty-five miles from the former to which he had ordered the main body at Deejee to move. Outram he sent to Khairpur, having summoned all the recalcitrant relatives of Ali Murad to meet the Commissioner. As they did not come in, Outram persuaded Napier that if he returned to the Residency at Hyderabad, he could at any rate make Naseer of Hyderabad and Shere Mahomed of Mirpur see reason and sign the new treaty. Sir Charles, learning that the Ameers were increasing their forces every day and that some thousands of the hill Beloochees, Rinds, Logharis, Chandians, etc., were coming down behind him, decided to push on for Hyderabad and leave the matter to push of pike if need be, before these vast accessions of strength might arrive.

The force at his disposal was small enough, barely 2,800 men, consisting of the Poona Horse, the 9th Bengal Light Cavalry, the Scinde Horse, H.M. 22nd Foot, the 1st Bombay Grenadiers, the 12th and 25th Bombay Infantry, and a company of the famous Madras Sappers, with Hutt's and Lloyd's batteries. This force in great heart, despite the increasing heat, reached Muttaree, twenty miles north of Hyderabad and 160 miles from Sukkur, on the 16th of February.

## THE BATTLE OF MEEANEE

Now was to begin one of those desperate battles which go to make up the great tradition of the British Army and the Army of India. At his camp at Muttaree Napier learnt that the Beloochees in immense numbers were established in and behind a deep dry watercourse, the Fullaillee, some ten miles ahead. Outram's messages from the Residency still asserted that the Ameers did not mean to fight, had not massed their men, or alternately, had sent them away. Napier's information was far otherwise. 30,000 Beloochees in arms were ten miles from his 2,800, and blocking the way to Hyderabad on which he was marching. Therefore he advanced on Meenee at midnight, arriving before their position at daybreak, in line of columns, the 22nd Foot on the right, the mounted troops on the left. Close to his right was the eleven-foot unscalable wall of one of the immense *shikargahs* or shooting parks which the Ameers delighted to make. The park was too thick to use as a way of approach but Napier dropped a company of the 22nd at the only opening to hold it to the last man, and thus protect most effectively his front and rear and baggage column.

The latter were parked under the Poona Horse as guard, and then the battle was ready. It was to be shirked by neither side and its story is a sheer record of hammer and tongs, tulwar on bayonet and locking ring. The British formed line and advanced towards the river bed, to find that the enemy's musketeers were holding the hitherside, these opened a hot fire, and then masses of swordsmen rushed forth. They were slowly beaten back to the edge of the river bank after severe hand-to-hand struggles, and then below them the British saw countless swordsmen and brilliant colours, a wild and picturesque sight. After three hours more of desperate charge and counter-charge the cavalry on the British left got across the Fullaillee and dashed in among the crowds on the far bank. Then the Beloochees slowly broke away but many remained to fight it out, giving no quarter and

asking none. They left 5,000 on the field. It was as brilliant and fierce a struggle as the Army had ever experienced, and the Indian troops vied with the 22nd in dash and courage. Hyderabad was occupied and all the Princes, the Ameer and his relatives surrendered.

Outram, who had a small escort of British and Indian troops, was attacked two days before in the Residency by several thousand Legharis, who were beaten off after a prolonged struggle. The Ameers had succeeded in bringing over from the opposite bank some 20,000 of the hill tribes to swell their forces, Outram eventually withdrawing to his steamers, got in touch with his chief and with a detachment was engaged on the day of the battle firing the Shikargah to drive out lurking Beloochees. After occupying the city, and putting 400 men in the great rock fort, Napier withdrew to the Indus bank and there threw up an entrenched camp, in case of need, but camped his men in the open in front of it. His force was now reduced to 2,000 men, and he sent up to Colonel Roberts at Sukkur and down to Kurrachee for every man that could be spared. The whole river bank between Hyderabad and both Sukkur and Kurrachee, however, was in a most disturbed state, stray bands of Beloochees attacking any post or detachment they could find. Lord Ellenborough, hearing of what was in progress, sent as reinforcements from the Sutlej unsought, Stack and the 3rd Bombay Light Cavalry, Blood's and Leslie's troops of Bombay Horse Artillery, and a battalion, while Roberts also sent a battalion and details. Time was getting on, the heat was getting great, and Shere Mahomed, the Ameer of Mirpur, had collected some 30,000 men, those who had fought at Meeanee and others, and now summoned Napier to surrender. The fate of the Kabul garrison was openly promised him: "he shall now be Cabooled" men said. It was not till well on in March that reinforcements could arrive. As Stack's column approached, by the same road that Sir Charles had marched, Shere Mahomed threatened to overwhelm him. Napier ordered him to double his last march and sent out Jacob's Horse to meet him, following himself with

a strong column. They evaded Shere Mahomed by a day, and on the 22nd Napier had them all united on the banks of the Indus. On the 23rd ships brought details and drafts from Kurrachee, and unexpectedly too a host of masts appeared from the Sukkur bringing a battalion and some much-needed gunners from Roberts.

#### THE BATTLE OF DUBBA, OR HYDERABAD

Thus reinforced, giving Stack's troops a day's rest, Sir Charles sallied forth on the night of the 23rd March to meet "The Lion," Shere Mahomed, who had spurned all proposals for negotiation. Marching ten miles inland, Sir Charles at dawn learnt that the Beloochees were entrenched two miles ahead, along a deep nullah which ran into the winding Fullaillee on its left bank, with their right on the village of Dubba. Deploying his force on the plain in front, he advanced in echelon from his left, the 22nd leading, under a sharp fire from fifteen of the Ameer's guns. The British force, pitifully small though it seemed for its task, was far superior to that which won Meeanee. When formed the line was arrayed as follows:—

The Poona Horse.

The 9th Bengal Light Cavalry.

The 22nd Foot.

The 25th, 21st, 12th and 1st Bo. N.I.

The 3rd Light Cavalry and the Scinde Horse.

Some 19 guns were in the intervals, only one of the troops of horse artillery having come up. It was such a fight as Meeanee, opened by the 22nd attacking the nullahs and gaining the village, battalion after battalion coming up in succession and throwing themselves at the masses of standards and swordsmen on their front. Napier in person gave the order to the 22nd to start. The fury of the troops was too much for even the Beloochees, who were driven from nullah to nullah. The cavalry on the right, to the General's consternation, started a charge on their own which was gloriously successful, and the

Beloochees now left the field in large numbers, some following Shere Mahomed who was making for the desert, others the hill tribes making for the Indus in the hope of re-crossing, but only to be a prey to the cavalry, while many elected to die where they stood. A British officer had recently been murdered by Beloochees, and his name was constantly on the lips of the sepoy as they refused quarter.

Fierce as had been the fighting, the casualties to the British were far less than at Meeanee, totalling only 270, of which 147 were in the 22nd who had first engaged. The enemy's loss was estimated at 5,000 with their fifteen guns and seventeen standards, and a complete loss of prestige and further desire to fight. Shere Mahomed had made for his capital at Mirpur, where the Poona Horse arrived next day in pursuit, when the townspeople opened the gates saying that the Ameer had fled with his family to the desert stronghold of Omarkot. Napier himself followed to Mirpur and sent Jacob and the camel battery, followed by the 25th N.I., to Omarkot. Owing, however, to the fear of the inundation now due, the British commander was anxious to get his troops back to the Indus and recalled the Omarkot force. The officer commanding, Captain Whitley of the Artillery, hearing that the Ameer had abandoned the town, referred for fresh orders and was directed to proceed. It was found that the fort was still held by Beloochees, but the Ameer was gone, and the garrison, on the arrival of the guns and the 25th Bombay Infantry, surrendered. A garrison was then left and the last stronghold of the Ameers, distant a hundred miles from Hyderabad, was in British hands, but the fierce summer was now in full blast, and it was necessary to get the troops under cover. Thus ended this most dramatic campaign.

Sir Charles was immediately appointed Governor of Sind, which was annexed and steadily cleared of Beloochees, and then commenced several remarkable years of rough and ready commonsense administration, which well prepared the way for the ordinary civil administration which was to follow. For many years, however, Sind was a special problem attracting a

wonderful set of British officers who accomplished more than even Sir Charles Napier with all his enthusiasms dared dream of. That great camaraderie and spirit of the Sind personnel and band of builders was something quite apart, and lasted in the land, till the end of the nineteenth century, and even endures in some sense still. In 1932 this province which Sir Charles and his handful of troops rescued from an utter darkness is about to see the waters of the Indus spread over the land. Its little *bandar* of Kurrachee is one of the great ports of the world, and the province bids fair to be one of the richest in India.

The Bombay Press, for some strange reason, elected to conduct a campaign of calumny against the whole force, even going so far as to say that the zenana of the Ameers of Hyderabad was distributed among the officers of the force. This called forth a signed protest to which most of the officers of the army appended their signature.

The Outram controversy raged somewhat discredibly, and the General was angered that Outram gave to the India Office a memorandum of his, which had not been attached to the State papers and which it published. It was altogether an unaccountable episode, and at this distance of time we can feel that Outram had been much tried and strained by all he had gone through and was not at his best. The whole of Army opinion throughout India was delighted to see the soldier act up to his responsibility and rely on his own judgment. And there is no manner of possible doubt not only that the Ameers had decided to resist and summon the hills to their aid, but had it not been for Sir Charles' fighting vigour, his force would probably have been lost. The Governor-General and the Duke of Wellington were loud in their encomiums, and Napier had full support for his methods of administration. His order book, both when getting his force disciplined, when fighting the excessive baggage habits of officers and when getting the country happily quieted, was rightly famous, for Sir Charles was a character and when he said things said them in a forceful and unusual manner. In



1846 during the first Sikh War he brought a force up the Indus and the Ravi to join Lord Gough in Lahore. Later when the outcry against "little Gough" after Chillianwallah was great, Sir Charles was brought out to supersede him. Happily Gough's victory at Goojerat, at which no one rejoiced more than Napier, had rehabilitated him, and he left in a shower of glory. The stories of Sir Charles as Commander-in-Chief were many, and his orders and memoranda were often unusual and always to the point. Here is one of the most characteristic. In those days divorce proceedings in the Army usually involved a Court Martial and a sentence of dismissal on a guilty officer. In one such case where the officer was sentenced to dismissal, the evidence showed that the lady in the case had been rather provocative. Sir Charles refused to confirm, writing "I quash the case. History records no second Joseph."

It was later one of the tragedies of the period, that circumstances brought Napier into acute conflict with Lord Dalhousie, that most competent and difficult of Governors-General.

The medal for "Scinde" was worn with the universal rainbow ribbon (representing the rising sun) given for the Afghan wars, and the Gwalior star. After the manner of the time, there were no clasps, but the medals bore "Meanee," "Hyderabad," or  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Meanee} \\ \text{Hyderabad} \end{array} \right.$  on the obverse as the case might be. Hyderabad was the official name for the Battle of Dubba.

## IX

### THE SIKH WARS

- i. Ferozeshah, 1845
- ii. Chillianwallah, 1849
- iii. Goojerat, 1849

December 21st, 1845

“Trumpeter, what are you sounding now?  
(Is it the call I’m seeking?)”  
“You’ll know the call,” said the trumpeter tall,  
“When my trumpet goes a-speakin’.  
I’m rousin’ ’em up, I am wakin’ ’em up,  
The tents are astir in the valley,  
And there’s no more sleep with the sun’s first peep,  
For I’m soundin’ the old Reveille.”

GREAT as are the traditions of the British Army there are few severer trials which it has undergone than the fierce struggles of the two Sikh wars known respectively as the “Sutlej” and “Punjab” campaigns. The story of Ferozeshah is perhaps the most stirring of the incidents of the first campaign, partly for its drama of the “midnight bivouac” and the anxious hours when the issue was in the balance. Francis Barron’s song which I venture to quote is peculiarly applicable to the scene.

The Sikh wars are the last when the Army, descended of Waterloo and Peninsula tradition, went into action with an Order of Battle and the old dress, when every leader was a Peninsula man. By the time the Crimea came, the term “Peninsula hero” was a term of contumely, for war and its methods were changing—“*sic transit gloria mundi!*” In the Sikh wars, fought in the cold climate of Northern India, the Army in the winter was dressed as in Europe, and the dress and accoutre-



THE BATTLE OF SOBRAON (10th FEBRUARY 1846): H.M. 31ST FOOT STORMING THE SIKH ENTRENCHMENTS



ments had not changed to any marked extent since Waterloo. The Indian battalions, like the Europeans, had scarlet coatees and white cross belts, with shakos covered with white drill covers, which some brigades discarded as the weather grew cold. The Horse Artillery, still in their old English Dragoon helmets, with a roll of panther skin round the base and horsehair crests, white leathers and high black boots, were always a brilliant feature prominent in the pictures of the day.

The Order of Battle *was* an Order of Battle, and the troops formed up and fought according, each unit in line or column, the cavalry on the flank, the guns in the intervals. The pictures of the day, those famous sets, the Punjab Battles, portray what must be a fairly accurate presentation of the opening phases at any rate. Two of them especially, those representing Feroze-shah and Sobraon, commemorate incidents of dramatic importance that the nation should never forget.

The drama began, however, when the young baron Runjhith Singh hacked his way to power and welded the Sikh confederacy into a kingdom that for close on half a century was almost an empire. The kingdom of the Punjab, with his large army trained and organised by European derelicts of the Napoleonic wars, was the most serious rival to British dominion. Happily for himself, wise old Runjhith, to whom came everything from the Koh-i-nur to the Timur ruby, knew his limitations, and knew that to measure strength with the English was the quickest of all ways of bringing a kingdom to an end. But he had long known that his success and his dominion were a one-man affair. Polygamy is the curse of dynasties, and there are few enemies in the East like the sons of one father and different mothers. Sons of the same mother are very different things and may be, nay often are, faithful brothers to a ruling prince, but the half-brother is a deadly menace; wherefore, in well-conducted Asiatic kingdoms, the man with a noose comes round the half-brotherhood at the succession.

In Runjhith's case, there were half-brothers but worthless ones, and no one knew it better than the great little man. It

was he who told the Governor-General at Rupar a few years before his death: "After me there is nothing and that red frontier of yours must move up."

And so it was. Shortly after the great durbar and review at Ferozepore on the Sutlej, where he and Lord Auckland met to start off the army of the Indus on its long road to Kabul and to cement the Tripartite treaty, the Lion of the Punjab was numbered with his fathers, and there soon commenced that series of murder and counter-murder at Lahore that shocked even the Courts of Central Asia. Then finally there remained but the infant Dhulip Singh, an evil, beautiful, and intriguing queen, and a rule of warring military soviets.

The tyranny and arrogance of the army were such that it became a matter of Court policy to drive them to their destruction over the border into British India. On the other side of the curtain, the situation was full of difficulty. The frontier officers had warned the Government for some time that the Sikh army might cross the frontier at any moment. It was generally recognised as fortunate that this army had not done so during the Gwalior outbreak of two years earlier, when many influences were at work to appeal to the Hinduism of the Sikhs to fraternise with the out-of-hand Gwalior army. The Sikh soldiery, too, believed with little enough justification that it was their aid which had got us out of Afghanistan with credit, and their arrogance was not diminished thereby.

Aggression might come from the Durbar—*i.e.* the Sikh Government itself—or from soldiery out of hand. The Sikh public, too, were equally apprehensive, though unreasonably so, that the British contemplated interfering to allay the appalling state of affairs existing at Lahore. The Rani herself had asked for such interference.

The problem before the Governor-General, Sir Henry Hardinge, of Peninsula and Ligny fame, was how to be prepared without arousing Sikh fears and precipitating the situation it was desired to avoid. There were some 7,000 troops on the frontier at Ferozepore, under Sir John Littler, where

the main road to Lahore crossed the Sutlej. There was a brigade at Ludhiana. There were the force at Umballa, and the troops in the Simla hills, and after that nothing till you reached Delhi and Meerut, and there was not a mile of railway in the length and breadth of Hindustan.

The strategical alternatives lay between concentration and even withdrawal from the frontier, or moving not a man, but the collection of carriage and supplies ready to move at once to support the frontier troops. In any case the choice lay between the folly of being caught by the Sikhs unconcentrated, or the worse evil of precipitating by movement the inroad that might not happen. Happily, the famous George Broadfoot, of Jalalabad repute, was agent to the Governor-General on the frontier, which meant there would be neither panic nor pusillanimity.

The whole story is still one of thrilling interest, but it is not the purpose of this volume to follow in detail the high politics of the story, but rather to paint in its humanities the actual story of Ferozeshah and the drama of the midnight bivouac, when Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief, with their Staffs dead around them, prepared to sell their lives in the morning. The story is of the afternoon battle on the shortest day of the year 1845, of the bivouac of the Sikh trenches, the burning camps, the missing brigades, and the desperate advance at dawn, with the 3rd Light Dragoons flickering over the field like a lambent flame. It is also the battle-field of Snarleyow, and that "batt'ry of the corps" of which Kipling sings, having heard the true story of the Driver's Brother with 'his head between his heels' from old Quartermaster-sergeant Bancroft who lived to a great old age in the Simla Hills, and who served these campaigns in a troop of Bengal Horse Artillery.

There are probably none left in India, and hardly one in England, who took part in the Sutlej campaign. One or two survivors crawled up to see the King at Delhi, but that was twenty-one years ago. On the battle-field a while ago an old peasant told the writer how as a small boy he had helped his father make

and sell coarse cakes to the British troops on that night of memory, and old folk will still talk of the Sikh gunners who died at their guns with bottles of rum tied to the wrist of their sponge-stave arms. A few mounds that cover the dead mark the field; and church and burial grounds at Ferozepore tell something of the tale.

On December 10th or 11th, there is some dispute as to the right date, the Sikh army crossed the Sutlej in force. The Governor-General with his whole outfit, including his band and all his papers, was near Ludhiana, and the Commander-in-Chief was at Umballa. Immediately the various forces moved to concentrate at Bassian; and the troops in the Simla Hills, British and Gurkha, were sent for in hot haste. The major portion of the force reached the mud village of Moodkee some twenty miles from Ferozepore, which was now invested by the Sikhs, on the afternoon of the 18th, after an appalling march of dust. The roads of those days were but tracks over friable soil, and the wells at the stages were all that marked them.

The British army consisted of the divisions of Major-Generals Gilbert, Sir Harry Smith, and Sir John McCaskill, of Afghan fame, but the divisions had only two brigades, while several of the units had not come up. There were three brigades of cavalry.

The country round was covered with scrub jungle and was absolutely flat, so that of visibility there was practically none. The Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Gough, has been accused of being surprised by the Sikhs, but this is not so. There were cavalry patrols out, who reported clouds of dust advancing on Moodkee. But there is no doubt that the cavalry of those days were not pushed ahead, and the same is evident at Chillianwallah in the '49 campaign, where nothing was known of a few miles ahead of the force. The reports of advancing dust drew the tired troops from their bivouacs, which had been formed in a square round the village. The Chief himself took forward the cavalry and horse artillery, while the divisions deployed into line. The enemy formed line not far from the British who at once attacked, and in a short afternoon battle, hampered by



dust, dusk, and the smoke of jungle fires, put the Sikhs to flight and captured almost all their guns, suffering some eight or nine hundred casualties, some of which were probably self-inflicted in the confusion of the dust haze.

The next evening four reinforcing battalions marched in, two of which were European, and it is on record that the Governor-General's band played them into camp. The night of the 18th was spent in collecting wounded and captured guns, and the Chief himself did not leave the field till 2 a.m., to return at dawn. The 19th and 20th were spent in clearing up, getting the reinforcements into their formations, and sending orders to Sir John Littler at Ferozepore.

Sir Henry Hardinge asked the Chief to let him serve him in a military capacity, and was appointed Second-in-Command, which his rank as Lieutenant-General and his military reputation well fitted him for. On the morning of the 21st the whole force marched at earliest dawn in the direction of what is generally known as Ferozeshuhr or Ferozeshah. The former name is usually used on the prints, the latter by Lord Gough. The former means the town of Firoze, the latter means the village or abode of gaffer Firoze, or, as it really is, gaffer Pheeru—*i.e.* Pheerushah. This village, the usual Punjab mud village with a high house or two in the centre, lay across the road to Ferozepore. About ten in the morning the force in line of columns arrived in front of the enemy who were found to be occupying a large entrenched horseshoe position round the village.

The force halted and made a haversack breakfast, chiefly of "elephant's lug"<sup>1</sup> while the Commander-in-Chief prepared his battle plans, which were to attack the enemy from where he found himself, with the whole day before him. Sir John Littler had orders to march out from Ferozepore, eluding the Sikh force observing him on the left bank of the Sutlej under Tej Singh, and join him near Ferozeshah. This force (which did not march till 8 a.m.) would arrive in the early afternoon

<sup>1</sup> Coarse cake of whole meal, molasses and chopped straw, made as elephant ration.

and be a timely reserve. At this stage the Governor-General abandoned his new position as Second-in-Command, and insisted on asserting his position as supreme head, and definitely ordered Lord Gough to wait the arrival of Sir John Littler.

The force was then set in motion in column and moved round the Sikhs, towards Ferozepore, ready to deploy into line to its right, thus performing the evolution in the well-known Snipy Green story. Early in the afternoon it had reached the village of Shikur some 4,000 yards from the southern face of the Sikh horseshoe, and there effected a junction with Sir John Littler. The whole army then formed line of battle in the time-honoured form.

And here begins the actual battle story with all the pomp and pageantry of an old-time army in its full dress. The British line was close on three thousand yards long, somewhat curved, to face the horseshoe, and barely a thousand yards from the enemy. Gilbert's division of two brigades on the right, then Wallace's division so called—little more than a strong brigade—and Littler's two brigades on the left, formed the front line, with Harry Smith's division in rear of the centre in reserve. Harriot's and Gough's cavalry brigades were on the left and left centre, and White's on the right. The guns were in line between the divisions, and were easily masked at the critical movements of the attack.

At half-past three or thereabouts, on the shortest afternoon in the year, the British artillery opened on the Sikh trenches and guns, in reply to the Sikh fire which had been tearing through the scrub and thorn jungle, amid which the British were forming for battle. The horse artillery commenced the battle, but were hopelessly outclassed, and twice had they to limber up and advance to get within effective range. Their brigadier reported that he must advance closer or be blown from the field. The heavy Sikh artillery was destroying his guns and blowing up his tumbrils.

The British artillery was well known to be too light, and for some time the Commander-in-Chief had been anxious to in-

crease its calibre. The horse artillery were practically the only horse-drawn guns, and they were armed with six-pounders. The nine-pounder field batteries were largely drawn by bullocks, and much slower to move and to handle. Shortly before this campaign a few of the field batteries had been horsed, and it had been proposed to arm the horse artillery with nine-pounders, and horse all the field batteries, bringing a twelve-pounder into the field drawn by bullocks.

The actual force of artillery at Ferozeshah appears to have been six horse artillery batteries of six-pounders, four or five field batteries of nine-pounders, and one battery of 8-inch howitzers, and, speaking generally, this metal could not touch the Sikh guns, so much so that of the captured guns hardly one had been damaged, while one-third of the British guns or wagons had been struck and disabled. Thus the brunt of the battle fell on the infantry despite the utmost devotion on the part of the artillery.

It was during this advance of the horse artillery to get to close grips with the Sikh guns that the incident of Snarleyow occurred, and we will give it in Sergeant Bancroft's own words:

“ . . . A ball struck the polehorse of the waggon on which I was seated in the stomach, and in an instant the poor horse's intestines were hanging about his legs. I called to the rider informing him of the mishap, saying ‘Tom! Tom (the man's name was Tom Connelly)! Snarleyow (the horse's name) has turned inside out, and his inwards are dangling about his legs.’ Tom shouted to the corporal leading the team ‘Joe! Joe! pull up; Snarley's guts are hanging about his legs!’ To which request the corporal coolly made answer: ‘Begorra, Tom, I would not pull up at such a time, if your own guts were hanging out!’ ” The incident with the ‘Driver's Brother,’ which is mingled in the poem with that of Snarleyow, had happened a few minutes earlier in that terrible duel of round shot.

By now Littler's division, which had one European and five Sepoy battalions, commenced the attack somewhat prematurely,

on the left, but coming on a heavy battery was repulsed with severe loss, in which H.M. 62nd suffered greatly. The second brigade of three Sepoy units for some unexplained reason rendered no assistance, and the division fell away in rear of the centre and took no more share in the battle. Wallace's weak division and Gilbert's two brigades had by now taken up the assault, and Sir Henry Hardinge ordered Harry Smith's division to fill a gap in the line.

One brigade led by the General himself did so, amid dense dust and a heavy fire, and in immense confusion passed through the Sikh batteries and trenches picking up fragments of other corps, carrying the village of Ferozeshah, and reaching the enemy's camp beyond in great disorder. Eventually this mob fell back on the village, which was full of horses, camels, and trappings of the Sirdars, and Sir Harry rallied and sorted them around a firm nucleus of H.M. 50th.

Gilbert's division, after severe loss, carried the trenches and batteries in its front, assisted by a brilliant charge of the 3rd Light Dragoons, who had piled the trench in their front with their own dead, and had swept through guns, tents, and camps in a wild torrent that destroyed all order in the Sikh interior. "*Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.*" The earth shook and the trumpets blared, as the 3rd covered themselves with even more glory than at Moodkee two days earlier, when they drove the Sikh horse screaming from the field, so that to this day even they are known as the "Moodkeewallahs" — "The men of Moodkee."

"Trumpeter, what are you sounding now?

(Is it the call I'm seeking?)"

"Can't mistake the call," said the trumpeter tall,

"When my trumpet goes a-speakin'.

I'm urg'in' 'em on, they're scamperin' on,

There's a drummin' of hoofs like thunder,

There's a maddening shout as the sabres flash out,

For I'm soundin' the 'Charge' . . . no wonder."

So it was hell for leather and devil take the hindmost, while Gilbert's men, with the old Chief in his white fighting coat among them, were bayoneting the gunners, and one of his brigades, apparently after Harry Smith's leading brigade had passed through, wheeled to its left and swept down the Sikh front, on the portion against which Littler had failed.

It was now dark and the dust was appalling. The result of the Governor-General's interference that morning was apparent. Four or five hours of daylight had been lost, the whole army was involved, neither commanders nor units knew where the others lay, or how their neighbours right or left had fared. The Sikh camps were burning, tumbrils were exploding, Staffs were killed—Sir Henry Hardinge had had six gallopers killed and five wounded. The Sikhs, themselves, were rallying and in places counter-attacking. Oh, for an hour, a priceless hour, of daylight! The division for whose arrival the whole battle had been delayed and disarranged had been knocked out and made of no effect at the very commencement. There had been no compensation for the loss of daylight.

Eventually orders were given by the Commander-in-Chief to draw off Gilbert's division, and all who could rally thereto, to a position three hundred yards outside the Sikh trenches, and for all units to sound their assembly. Gradually those companies, battalions, and remnants who were within hail collected on the position thus marked, and it is this spot, with the Chief's and Sir Henry Hardinge's Staffs talking behind the lines of sleeping men, that is depicted in the '*Midnight Bivouac*'. There was no food, there were no hospitals, there was no water. All over the field clumps of wounded and stragglers, formed often round the regimental surgeons, stayed where night had overtaken them lest worse befall.

Littler's division had hidden itself in rear, and distant fires denoted its probable bivouac. Harry Smith and one of his brigades had disappeared from the ken of the chief command. As a matter of fact at about 3 a.m. that gallant commander, finding that the Sikhs were showing signs of coming on, and

that his troops were done to a turn, slowly withdrew from Ferozeshah covered by his bedrock 50th. Making a circuit he eventually arrived at the village of Misreewallah some 2,000 yards behind the main force, and near where Littler's division was licking its wounds. Sir Harry Smith records finding here a cavalry brigade, some irregular horse, horse artillery, and some three thousand men from every regiment in the Army. He also ran into an excited officer of Army Headquarters, who told him that all was lost and that he was to retire to Ferozepore at once. This Sir Harry repudiated, and about dawn an officer named Christie, of Christie's horse, offered to take him to the Commander-in-Chief.

In the main bivouac the two tried old soldiers, Gough and Hardings, determined to stick it out, and to attack again at dawn, repulsing all feebler counsels. But the Governor-General sent away his sword that the Duke had given him after Ligny, sent away to his secretary at Moodkee to be ready to destroy all his papers, and ordered off the field Prince Waldemar of Prussia<sup>1</sup> and his suite, of whom one had already been killed.

During the night a Sikh heavy gun, to which the Sikh gunners had crept, opened at close range. Sir Henry himself set a party of the 80th to retake it, which they did cheering loudly. But in the Sikh camp, though the British leaders knew it not, disorder reigned supreme, and the Akali fanatics, turbulent as ever, were pillaging their own chiefs' camps.

To this bivouac, forming at dawn for the fresh attack, the arrival of Sir Harry Smith, and his brigade, with many stragglers attached, was a godsend, and warmly was he welcomed by Sir Hugh Gough.

Then the whole force swept forward in a cheering line, and carrying all before them, and capturing every Sikh gun, eventually emerged in one triumphant line at the far north end of the horseshoe, and there burst into enthusiastic cheers as the Commander-in-Chief and his Second-in-Command, the Governor-General, rode together down it.

<sup>1</sup> Incognito as Count Ravensburg.

Hardly, however, had the night of sorrow turned to this dawn of joy, when news came that the whole of Tej Singh's army from Ferozepore was on them, and while the famished, dog-tired, if victorious army was changing its front to its new left, to meet this attack, the Sikh guns opened. Doggedly the battalions formed. The old Chief rode out with his staff to draw the fire while the packed battalions wheeled, and the tired and jaded cavalry tried to canter to the flanks. The glorious 3rd Light Dragoons once more charged the Sikh horse, when, wonder of wonders, for the British artillery had spent their ammunition, the Sikh attack died away, and the great force slowly followed the discomfited units which were making for the Sutlej.

Tej Singh later told Sir Henry Lawrence, that finding our troops holding against him those very trenches from which they had turned his countrymen, he felt that it would be folly to try to regain them from troops so invincible, and it is probable that this was his genuine reason.

The weary victors found food and water in the Sikh position, and the wounded and many of the dead were carried to Ferozepore, where the Governor-General established his headquarters, while the Commander-in-Chief slowly followed the Sikhs to the fords on the Sutlej and awaited a reinforcing artillery.

Of Sir Harry Smith's clean-fought success at Aliwal, and the crowning victory at Sobraon with its destruction of the Sikhs in the river, this story does not pretend to deal. It has illustrated the three well-known pictures, the *Midnight Bivouac*, the *Advance in the Morning*, and the *Charge of the 3rd Light Dragoons*, those dramatic scenes in one of the great dramas of British military history. It is not necessary to dwell on the controversies; unfortunately, great military events are so often followed by controversies. There was plenty of room for one in the overruling of Sir Hugh's plan of attack by Sir Henry Hardinge, with its results; there was the usual attack in the Press on Sir Hugh's methods of fighting, for in those days, to quote Sir Charles Napier, every unit contained in its ranks "an

atrabilious correspondent," who criticised with only the knowledge of his own company front. We may admit, with Sir Harry Smith, that the whole force was handled like an overgrown battalion, and that a shower of gallopers, who more often than not were killed, was the method of control. But with an enemy on an entrenched position and the arms of those days, a battle, like Waterloo, was an affair of close-order fighting in which control soon disappeared, and we can more safely criticise the habit of the Chief in leading his troops to battle instead of controlling them from the reserve. But we must remember that the Duke himself was compelled to do the same at Waterloo.

Lord Gough's career in India and the mighty campaigns he fought have been the subject of much and bitter discussion, but we may attribute much of the criticism to the dislike of an army to heavy casualties, and being outmatched by heavy artillery, on meeting the most martial and best organised enemy it had yet met in India. It is always to be regretted that the papers and diaries of Sir Patrick Grant, his most intimate and most trusted Staff Officer, and the staff officer of all others trusted by all, during these campaigns, were accidentally burnt in later years. He could and possibly would have thrown a very different light on much that happened, including also those miserable days when he was making a new army to retake India in 1857. Some inkling of what he knew may be gathered from a paragraph in a private letter of Lord Dalhousie's: "You will see Pat Grant, who will give you quite a different impression of that usually accepted as to where Harry Smith's force spent the night," or words to that effect. There was no doubt a feeling in the Army that they had not been handled to the best advantage, and the military headquarters ascribed this to the interference of the Governor-General.

But none of these things mars the fighting glory nor the dramatic side of this striking picture, nor affects the hard fact that all the Sikh artillery, close on a hundred guns, remained in the victor's hands, and that the British had now time and





FEROZESHAH: DAWN AFTER THE MIDNIGHT BIVOUAC (22nd FEBRUARY 1846): THE ADVANCE  
OF H.M. 50TH FOOT

(v. p. 130)



prestige to cover their concentration from below of sufficient force to finish the campaign and dictate terms in Lahore itself. Many curious incidents happened, none more so than the action of the sunstricken staff officer already referred to, whose orders, refused by Sir Harry Smith, sent some of the cavalry and most of the artillery marching to Ferozepore on the morning of the 22nd, which may have further contributed to Tej Singh's half-heartedness. Sir Henry Hardinge relates how riding to Ferozepore on the 23rd he met them returning, and fell on the brigadier in no measured terms, meeting also the mad staff officer in pyjamas, who explained that his breeches had been so riddled with grape that they had fallen off!

The conduct of the Indian troops, that is to say, the Sepoys of the Bengal Line, almost exclusively in those days drawn from the high-caste peasantry of Oude and Behar, was much criticised. They had been heavily marched with little time for food, always a difficulty with the ceremonious Hindu feeder. They had had no food on the 21st and little enough water, with a double ration of dust. Sir Henry, who had commanded Portuguese troops led by British officers, said they "had done at Ferozeshah as well as the Portuguese would have done. The Sepoy like the latter had his good and his bad fighting days, and Ferozeshah was one of the bad ones."

Sir Henry himself records how, when he and the Chief rode down the victorious front on the morning of the 22nd amid the lowered colours and acclamations of the troops, an officer commanding a Bengal corps said to him: "Never pay attention to their shouts, there is hardly a man of them stayed the night with me," and that was a bitter thing to say in the hour of victory.

At Sobraon, the crowning victory, when there was no doubt of British success, and the British gun park was as powerful as that of their foes, the sepoy fought with great determination. In the Punjab campaign, three years later, the same stories were rife, and it was said on both occasions that there was a mental dislike to sharing in the downfall in the last great Indian princi-

pality. And it would be small wonder if there had been some stratum of truth in the statement. On the other hand religious feelings are an excellent pretext when feet are cold. Bagdad was very holy ground to Indian soldiery in '16 when rations were bad and prestige was low and Kut had fallen. Even the river steamers ceased to develop engine trouble when Maude was into Bagdad.

But perhaps it is the old story, "*pas d'argent, point de Suisse*," in other words "*pas de distribution*, no fighting," for an army travels on its belly, and the troops at Ferozeshah and Chillianwallah were very empty. So let us only remember the glory, and forget the to and fro of circumstance. Whatever the sepoy may have done, and however so much or so little he may have failed, there are no two words as to the majesty and dominion of the British soldier, horse and foot, and of none more than the 3rd Light Dragoons.

Seventy miles out of Delhi by the Great North Road lies an old cantonment, long derelict, named Kurnal. It was long famous after the days of Lord Lake as the frontier station of Upper India, and Sir David Ochterlony long controlled frontier politics therefrom. To this day the Ochterlony House stands, thanks to Lord Curzon, a public monument, with the alabaster lions on the gateways that the old General brought from Italy.

The cantonment was transferred to Umballa a few years before the Sutlej campaign, even the church was moved, save for its tower and its steeple, which also remains to this day. The vacant area was long occupied by the Stud Department, and to-day by the Army Dairies. In the old low vaulted barracks now used as cowsheds, inside a domed roof, is a painted trophy of the Royal Arms and Cypher, with the battle honours of the 3rd Buffs and the 3rd Light Dragoons, and a soldier of each corps in the full dress of the 'forties as supporters. Ever since, some loving hand in Stud or Farms has repainted this big trophy, and the figures and the uniforms are as fresh as when painted over eighty years ago—and hardly a soul to see the green memory.





So we may leave the dead of Ferozeshah in the sure and certain hope. There were 694 dead on the field of battle, and 1,721 wounded, of whom two-thirds were European. Many wounded died of their wounds, for 700 are buried at Ferozepore alone. "Both rich and poor of low degree," and among them George Broadfoot and D'Arcy Todd, famous and irreplaceable, while at Moodkee, two leaders of Afghan fame, Major-Generals Sir John MacCaskill and Sir Robert Sale, had ended the careers they had commenced in Spain. How better can we end such a story, than with another and the closing verse of Francis Barron's moving song?

"Trumpeter, what are you sounding now?  
 (Is it the call I'm seeking?)"  
 "Lucky for you if you hear it at all  
 For my trumpet's but faintly speakin'.  
 I'm callin' 'em home—Come home! Come home!  
 Tread light o'er the dead in the valley  
 Who are lyin' around, face down to the ground  
 And they can't hear me sound the 'Rally.'  
 But they'll hear it again in a grand refrain  
 When Gabriel sounds the last 'Rally'."

## II. CHILLIANWALLAH

January 13th, 1849

Sabres drawn and bayonets fixed,  
 Fight where fought Alexander;  
 Oh Paddy Gough's a cross betwixt  
 A bulldog and a salamander.

The Sutlej Campaign or the First Sikh War, ended in the mudflats and fords of the Two Sobras, the plural name Sobraon being given to Gough's great victory. The last thing wanted was another British province and it was arranged to set up a guided Sikh Government, during the minority, of the only remaining son, of Runjhith Singh—son however, only by courtesy of an old man's vanity—the little Dhulip Singh. The magnanimous and understanding Henry Lawrence stayed as Resident

at the minority court and the pick of eager young shirt-sleeve Englishmen were lent to help the Durbar in its administrative troubles amid the remnant of its turbulent army.

But circumstances conspired to upset the benevolent intentions of the British who had only detached the Afghan province of Kasmir and a small district in the Jullundur Doab from the Sikh kingdom. It happened that early in 1848 Mul Chand, Governor of the Multan province, had been asked for his revenue accounts, and preferred to resign rather than render them. The new Diwan accompanied by two British officers and some Durbar troops proceeded to take over. Some unruly Sikh troops attacked and wounded the British officers, who lying in the Edgah, were again attacked, this time by a force which Mul Chand had joined, and they were murdered. This incident, increased by the difficulty of moving British troops to the scene in the height of a Punjab hot season, spread to a rising of all the newly-constituted Sikh Army and many chiefs. Multan, a powerful fortress, was besieged by a British force, while Lord Gough assembled an army sufficient to cope with what was now a crisis of the first magnitude eagerly watched by all the elements of unrest in India. It is not proposed to follow the whole story, nor the stirring tale of Lieut. Herbert Edwards with frontier levies trying to stem the flood, nor how Multan was stormed and the bodies of the two murdered officers carried in triumph up the breach to their final burial. But the two main battles are almost the most famous in India, somewhat eclipsed in the niche of military fame by the tragedy of '57. By the autumn, while the British guns were still hammering at the thick mud bastions and curtains of Multan, Lord Gough's army had assembled by the end of '48, and moved to the "River of China," the Chenab, in the glorious cold season of the Punjab only hampered by the occasional cold winter rain. The great river had been successfully crossed and the army was moving up to the Jhelum, the Hydaspes of Macedon, in the gorges and jungles of which the Sikh Army was reported to be posted.



Because the battle which followed is one of much controversy, a controversy which has only just re-echoed in a Sunday paper of 1932 in the matter of an apocryphal order "Threes About, and damn the baggage!" it will be of interest to examine the battle field itself, with more detail than usual. It is also an interesting object of pilgrimage for those in the Punjab.

Chillianwallah lies three or four miles south of the canal colony at Rasul on the Jhelum, and is best reached from Rasul itself on a branch line, or from Chillianwallah Road on the Sind-Sagar line between Lala Musa and the Malakwal bridge over the Jhelum. Rasul is one of the two possible places at which Alexander could have crossed the Jhelum, when he forced the ford in the face of Porus and utterly defeated him. The battlefields therefore between British and Sikh, and Greek and Indian, were probably almost identical.

Now to reconstruct the battlefield. Lord Gough having crossed the Chenab, by a series of difficult manœuvres, was advancing in January, 1849, to bring the Sikh army to battle. That army was, he knew, posted and entrenched on the heights near Rasul across one of the roads from Peshawur to Lahore. The Kharian ridge dies away to a low rolling down just by Rasul, and on the southern extremity of the ridge and on the downs, the Sikh army was posted, the village of Rasul being near their centre, their right stretching round to Moong. Behind the ridge, between it and the Jhelum, and on the ridge itself, lay their camps. Their position covering the ford was provided with a perfect glaxis of sloping grass.

The British-Indian army consisted of Thackwell's cavalry division, and Gilbert's and Colin Campbell's infantry divisions. Marching up the unmetalled track from Ramnagar via Dhinga to Rasul, on the 13th of January, the army, according to one of the alternative plans in its commander's mind, turned off the track about mid-day and halted before a typical mud village of the Punjab—the village of Chillianwallah.

The day was one of those perfect soldiering days that make up a Punjab cold weather; cold and crisp with clouds on the

horizon, and the snowy range of the Pir Panjal on the right flank of the army.

The troops were in their ordinary winter clothing, mostly in full dress, scarlet and blue coatees, white duck or drab trousers, shakos and white cross belts, the Native Infantry clad in close representation of the British Line, and the regular Native Light Cavalry like the British dragoon.

There had not been much incident that morning. The army had traversed a dead level plain, covered with big patches of *bher* jungle alternating with clearings and fields, with the normal mud village every three or four miles. There had been caperings of Sikh horse in the scrub in front, and a Sikh outpost had been driven from a mound close to the village of Chillianwallah (Cheeliānwallah is the local pronunciation), while away in the distance the Sikh camps were plainly visible on the Rasul heights.

Soon after noon the army was forming up close to the village to wait while the quartermasters were parcelling out the camping ground. The light would fail early. The Sikhs were apparently in position three or four miles away, their position needed careful reconnaissance, and Lord Gough had decided to camp.

There was the usual lull while troops are waiting to move to their camps; officers were looking about; one account by two young officers states that they had climbed up into a tree to get a view, as the whole front of Chillianwallah was covered with *bher* scrub. They saw crowds of Sikhs in the jungle, barely a mile off, perhaps less. Suddenly from out of the scrub a Sikh battery, and then several others, opened fire, bowling round shot into camp.

The British heavy artillery was ordered into action near the mound in front of the village, and played for some little time; then early in the afternoon came the order for the whole force to advance in line, save one brigade. Presumably the force advanced much as it was forming up to camp, Colin Campbell's division on the left, Gilbert's on the right, Pope's cavalry brigade on the right, White's cavalry brigade on the left.

We here come to the stage when it is possible to compare the accounts of the battle with the ground as it is now. It is thought by many that the jungle is now less than in 1849, but it is a question if there is really much change. Neville Chamberlain speaks of patches and belts of scrub, and that exactly describes the ground to-day. We know that both divisions advanced, and that it was impossible to maintain much formation, while brigades and their supporting batteries lost all touch. Each brigade fought its own battle, hammer and tongs, at the closest range. The accounts of the battle and the plans all show a Sikh position on a rise something less than a mile west of the village. But, as a matter of fact, the rise, especially from the Chillianwallah side, is almost imperceptible (though writers who weren't there talk of "storming the glacis"). What seems to have been the case was that the brigades, struggling through the scrub came across an irregular clearing a hundred yards or so wide, with more scrub beyond, and the Sikh guns were drawn up at the edge of this. Crossing this open scrub, swept at close ranges with grape and musketry, is where the heavy losses must have occurred.

It was a short battle on a short winter afternoon, with gathering clouds in the sky. Lord Gough had evidently felt he could not camp in such a jungle without attacking the enemy, who were almost touching him. Towards dusk the brigades had won through the scrub towards a line of villages more in the open. As night was approaching, and the Sikhs had fallen back, Lord Gough was urged to withdraw to his camp, but delayed doing so till very late, to allow of his wounded being collected; but, as a matter of fact, it was impossible to get them all in, so scattered and hidden were they by the scrub.

The main incidents of the fight are well known. The heavy losses of H.M. 24th is perhaps the fact most remembered. This battalion went into the fight over a thousand strong and lost 11 officers and 193 men killed, and 10 officers and 268 men wounded, with 38 men missing. The accounts tell of how, after advancing with difficulty through the scrub, they came

into an open space with a deep swamp between them and the Sikh guns, and here is where so much of their loss occurred. It is hard at first to locate this piece of ground, for there is no sign of a swamp in December. But two circumstances locate it quite clearly. One writer speaks of the 24th going through a *dak* jungle, another says that the 24th dead were not brought in to the main graves. Now about 1,500 yards from Chillianwallah to the right of the Moong road, are the only *dak* trees for some miles; to the left of the road are three enclosures with unnamed trench graves, while in front of the *dak* jungle are some dry buffalo wallows, and coarse *vlei* grass. After Christmas rains this would no doubt appear a formidable obstacle when swept by grape at point blank range. The exact spot where the 24th charged can therefore be clearly located, even in this extremely featureless battlefield. The 24th went into action, it is interesting to read, in their full dress, and most of their shakos were pulled off in the thorn scrub. The 29th Foot, in the other division, were wearing forage caps and shell jackets.

The Central Library at Army Headquarters in Simla, contains an interesting instance of the confiction of accounts of events. In Thackwell's *Narrative of the Second Sikh War*, p. 163, it is stated, "The 24th lost its colours and much ammunition." A reader has added the following comment in the margin:—"I saw Phillips tie the Queen's colour round his waist after tearing it from its staff. When we found him among the killed next morning, the colour was recovered.—I. A." Another reader has scribbled "Untrue. I had the honour of placing those very colours in St. Mary's Church, Warwick, in 1869.—E. C. Capt. 24th."

Laurence Archer gives an interesting account of the rallying of the 24th outside Chillianwallah by remnants of companies, and the return of the few remaining men of that regiment to the fighting line.

The rest of the battle-field gives no clue to any particular incidents, and all one can do is to imagine this line of brigades advancing simultaneously, but soon losing direction in the

jungle, emerging just in front of the Sikh guns, each fighting its own desperate bayonet fight, supported so far as possible by such of the British guns as could force a way through the scrub. Contemporary accounts describe the enthusiasm of the first advance in line. (Thackwell and Laurence Archer.)

The losses amounted to 2,338 killed and wounded (of whom 22 British and 16 Native officers were killed, and 659 men killed or missing), and were fairly well distributed through all corps, European and Native. The fears openly expressed that the *Poorbeah* regiments were in league with the Sikhs through the *Poorbeahs* in the Sikh regiments appear to have been quite unfounded. (Poorbeah=Easterner, i.e.: Oude man.)

The Sikh losses were very heavy also, and to this day the people round will tell you, as Lord Gough always averred, that it was at Chillianwallah they were beaten, and that Goojerat was a walk-over. The fight was to a great extent with the regular Sikh army, clothed something like our own men, and till recently trained by Europeans. There is no doubt that they were heavily drugged. One account mentions a dead Sikh gunner with a bottle of spirits tied to his wrist. Their gunners died at their guns, but though almost all their guns were at one time in our possession, only 12 of the lightest were secured.

The confusion following the battle may easily be imagined. The baggage of two divisions and three cavalry brigades was around Chillianwallah, guarded only by one cavalry brigade. The troops found their way back to camp after dark; there was no defensive position; all was a tangle. Lord Gough apprehended an attack on his camp by the Sikh irregulars, and to add to the misery it came on to rain—the cold rain of a Punjab winter.

All night long the Sikhs roamed the deserted battle-field, withdrawing their abandoned guns and massacring any British wounded they could find. There is one pitiful story of the doing to death of a very minute wounded English drummer boy. Most of the dead were slashed across the mouth, and the ghastly

grin their faces presented was a horrible sight. Most of the bodies had been stripped, and the marble-white of the European corpses after the night's rain, was in ghastly contrast to the black of the natives. Many of the stripped bodies seemed to have been dragged through the thorn bushes, so much were they torn.

An attempt was made to collect the dead at the Chillianwallah mound, and a great many are buried in the long trenches there. A contemporary account however tells that camels were sent out to collect them, and that before long the indecent sight of corpses lashed on the camels coming into camp, was too horrible and demoralizing, and that the remainder were buried out where they fell. This explains these three large nameless graves on the south of the Moong road.

The big graves on the mound are well cared for. There are several long trench graves covered with masonry, and one or two individual graves. The whole is within a double enclosure, and a high red sandstone obelisk with inscriptions is a landmark for many miles round. Outside the enclosure is a handsome cross erected by Lord Mayo, on which are inscribed the names of all the officers, British and Native, who fell. The ages of two old subahdars is given, one being seventy, and the other sixty-five, both, by their names, Brahmins of Oude. In their days the oldest soldier in a battalion of Bengal Infantry was the senior native officer, and he served practically till he died.

There is little more to be seen on the ground. It is interesting to notice that the dreaded ravine at Rasul, "several hundred feet deep," is not more than 150 feet deep, and, running out at right angles to the position, was not an effective obstacle.

Armies do not like heavy casualties without complete victory, and loud and deep were the grumbings after Chillianwallah, though always drowned by the cheers of the men, whenever the little white-haired chief appeared among them, and all and sundry rejoiced at the complete success that was to crown

his arms, before his successor arrived. The British public had been frightened by the unnecessarily gloomy reports of what had happened. The Governor-General had expressed his fears, and gallant, pernicketty, yet purposeful old Sir Charles Napier, the victor of Sind, had been dug out, and was on his way—"Old Fagin" as the Army called him. The Duke of Wellington had said to him "if you don't go, I must." So Sir Charles, the old campaigner packed razor and tooth-brush, and started for the East once more, old in years, worn in health, young in heart.

### III. THE BATTLE OF GOOJERAT

February 21st, 1849

The panorama now rolls on to another scene that was once and for all to bring back under one control the Punjab, the lost province of the Mogul Empire, which was being rebuilt on surer lines. The Battle of Goojerat was the last great battle against an organised Indian force, and it was well fought and a crowning victory.

On January 13th was fought that genuine soldiers' battle just described in the scrub and the mud-swamps about Chillianwallah. The army had fought it out corps by corps, regiment by regiment, and the difficulties in disentangling in the dark have been explained. Gradually the troops collected in bivouac near the village, and then it came on to rain, the bitter cold, driving rain and fog of a Punjab winter. There were many dead to bury and more wounded to collect, and the rain had turned the soil to that butterlike state so peculiar to the "pat" of Upper India. The camels could not move, and the troops huddled in their bivouacs, while the cavalry could not reconnoitre, and all was misery. Gradually, however, the army recovered itself, as armies will, and the rain cleared away, spirits rose, and sepoy pipe-clayed their belts and untied their ears, and the army became an army once again.

Over the way, not three miles off, lay the Sikh army, hard hit, no doubt, by that desperate winter afternoon's struggle in the thorn jungle, but still an army in being, with its spirits also rising. It lay in two halves. The regular portion, the regiments of the Durbar, nominally in revolt against their rulers, in reality at war with the British on behalf of those rulers, held the spurs and ridges of the mountains that bordered the Jhelum river about the village of Rasul. The second portion, the irregulars, lay clear of the hills lower down the Jhelum among the villages and the thick jungle that lay on its banks. Hard by the battle-field now stand the headworks of a magnificent canal irrigating hundreds of square miles of wheat-land, and right through the centre of the Sikh position another now winds to conduct a fresh head of water to more arid lands.

So Lord Gough sat at Chillianwallah and straightened out his army, and the Sikhs also sat over the way a-watching him, and neither liked the other's looks, but while the Sikhs sat in a barren tract, the British had the fertile portion of the Punjab behind them. Lord Gough had made up his mind that matters were too serious to take any risks, and that when next he fought he would fight to a finish, so he decided that he would wait till Multan was captured, and the troops besieging it able to march to join him. From this decision—whether it was wise or whether it was foolish—neither the adjurations of Lord Dalhousie (the Governor-General at Lahore) nor the representations of the civil and political officers in his camp could move him. He recognised, no doubt, that prestige was of almost paramount importance. Of quite paramount importance, however, in his eyes was his ability to win the next battle, not by merely holding his ground after it, but by achieving another Sobraon. To be sure of this he wanted more men and, above all, more guns, and heavy guns at that.

January 25th brought the news that Multan had fallen on the 22nd, and the bodies of the murdered Anderson and Vans Agnew had been carried to their final burial-place up and over the breaches. The fall of Multan released the reinforcements





THE BATTLE OF GOOJERAT

The Afghan Horse, having broken through the lines, charging the rear of the British Guns.



so anxiously awaited. General Whish's division of the Bengal Army and Colonel Dundas' Bombay column were moved as fast as possible up the banks of the Chenab to join the Commander-in-Chief, who was still watching Shere Singh and his Sikhs in front of Rasul. Behind the Rasul position and the Khoree pass, between the rugged hills and the river Jhelum, was a long strip of fields and flats that could hide and encamp many thousands of troops. On February 2nd Shere Singh was reported to have left a garrison in the Rasul trenches, and was found to have moved away north behind these same hills, to emerge on the 5th on the British side of the Khoree pass, a few miles from Lord Gough's camp, where he remained in rear of the village of Khoree. Here he was watched from a British outpost established on a mound near to the village of Mugnawallah in earthworks and gun-pits which may be seen to this day. The next day this outpost had to fall back, and Lord Gough was sore beset to attack the enemy as they lay at Khoree. His Excellency, however, would not be stirred from his original plan, wrangle his advisers as they wished. The guards on the Chenab fords were strong, and he did not consider it possible for Shere Singh to break across that river back to the Rech *Doab* and the vicinity of Lahore. Rather he anticipated that they would make for the well-supplied tracts of country on the right bank of the Chenab in the Chajh *Doab*. Here we may note a quaintness of nomenclature in the land of the five rivers. The term *doab*, which is Persian for two rivers, is applied to the land between any two adjacent rivers. The *doabs* formed by the five rivers are called by names made up of the initials of the two rivers that enclose a particular *doab*. The Chajh *Doab* is the territory between the Chenab and the Jhelum, The Rech *Doab* that between the Ravi and the Chenab, and so on.

On February 11th the Sikhs advanced from Khoree out into the open towards the British camp. Lord Gough wrote to Lord Dalhousie to say that he considered this an attempt to draw him out so that the masses of irregulars in the Moong

jungles could rush his camp and supplies. At any rate he refused to attack, and the army of the Khalsa marched away from Khoree to Goojerat on February 14th, to take up a position between the fort there and the river Chenab opposite the old town of Wuzeerabad, which was what the British headquarters expected them to do. On the 16th Lord Gough moved the whole of his force from Chillianwallah to the Chenab by four short marches, with his troops in fighting formations and his baggage well guarded. At Tricca on the 18th the force from Multan came up, and on the 20th the joint forces deployed for battle and advanced a short distance to a line in rear of the village of Shadiwal.

War is not all evil, and every campaign, even among the less civilised races, is enlightened by the flow of the milk of human kindness and high feeling. An incident of this battle is well worth remembering. George Lawrence, a prisoner among the Sikhs, was sent in on parole just before the battle to interview Lord Gough. Shere Singh probably half hoped he might abscond and be a friend at court. He, however, returned true to his bond, and what was undoubtedly a very precarious position, since Easterns in the hour of defeat make short shrift of prisoners, as witness Maclean's murder after Maiwand. As George Lawrence rode back into the Sikh lines, the host of the Sikhs cheered him enthusiastically, even as the ranks of Tusculum cheered Horatius. It is such conduct that has ever appealed to men of all creeds and races.

It is impossible to dwell on the battles of the Sikh wars without alluding to the controversies which raged regarding them, and Lord Gough's conduct of the campaign. The victories of the Sutlej campaign were, it will be remembered, extremely costly ones. How far this was due to leading or to a want of training, as a field force, of the armies of those days is a very moot point, and one which can never be satisfactorily settled, unless the desks of the dead have more documents yet to yield. Right or wrong, competent or incompetent, we know one thing for certain, that His Excellency Lord Gough of the Sutlej was

as straight and gallant an old soldier as ever served the Crown, and a well-determined leader, whom the troops cheered madly whenever they saw him, as they did another Indian soldier of slight stature and high prowess, in our own day.

We also know that the headquarters of the army in India were quite unorganised for war, and that a staff capable of handling Indian armies of that size against a first-class adversary had not been created. He had no adequate machine to hand to translate the determination of his intentions into terms of competent manœuvre. He was surrounded with the memory and tradition of that political service of India, whose management of the Afghan wars had been so criticised by the army. Attached to his force were many competent young soldier-civilians whose position in their relations to the Commander-in-Chief of a force in the field and the Government of India was not so definite as is now the case. We know that some of them urged courses on the Commander-in-Chief which he would not accept. We are told by his biographer that this move to Goojerat, and offer of battle by the Sikhs in an open plain, was exactly what Lord Gough had known must come to pass, and that this move was the only thing that the Sikhs under the circumstances could do. Many people have written many accounts, and distinguished soldier-politicals such as Sir Henry Lawrence and Sir Henry Durand had criticisms to offer. The further study with the light of full information has certainly shown that the charge of hurling his army at Chillianwallah against a powerful unreconnoitred position was inaccurate. Even the plans of the battle of Chillianwallah exaggerate the ground, and tend to show that the Sikhs held a ridge, instead of being posted on an imperceptible slope, in a position to which they had moved to attack the British, which was the actual case. But because this charge had been levelled it was the fashion of the day, and for many years after, to say that this victory of Goojerat was fought on equally foolish lines and that the victory, both strategical and tactical, was all an accident. Mr. Robert Rait, in his biography of Lord Gough,

puts forward the view held by the ardent admirers of the gallant old man, while those who may not, perhaps, admit the full claim for prescience and generalship are quite content to feel that results fully justified measures, and that at any rate the bulk of the criticism came from unworthy or misinformed sources. To a student of the conditions of the army in India in those days, it is clear that the army itself was not a machine from which the best results could be obtained. It was not from financial reasons an "army in being," for its essential services were not on a mobilizable business footing. The native portion of the Bengal Army was fast going down the scale of efficiency. The two Services—the Queen's and the Company's—were by no means always cordial. The troops were not trained as an army for war, and troops, commanders, and staff were for the most part untrained in their war formations.

However that may be, we have now reached the stage in the narrative when we may leave controversy and criticism behind and step out into that magnificent panorama that faced the army of the Punjab, on that spring morning in Northern India, eighty-three years ago.

Of all the glorious mornings which it is the privilege of mankind to enjoy, a fine morning in the cold season in the Punjab is second to none. Those who now journey to the north by the early train from Lahore or march up the Grand Trunk Road from Wazirabad (as we now can write it) pass Goojerat and see the same sight as burst on that army, less, however, the splendid panoply of war and the excitement of coming battle. From the railway line which runs north to Peshawur, and from the great Trunk Road, the turnpike of the King-Emperor, as from the British bivouacs by Shadiwal, stretch the plains of the Chajh *Doab*, almost unbroken save for the young corn-shoots of the wheat-fields, with the typical Punjab villages rising at intervals across the plain. Rising, because each village emerges from the ruins of its predecessor, generation in, generation out, since the days when Alexander came down from the passes and Prince Gautama preached his message of peace.

On the potsherds and plinths of the past each village stands, a castle unto itself. Distant some three miles, the small town of Goojerat towered high over the plain in the morning sun, but behind it, glory of glories, stood as it still stands, so close that you might think you could throw a stone to it, the great Pir Panjal, the unbroken line of snow that forms the outer Himalaya. Peak on peak, serrated, dazzling, clear cut, with a breeze blowing from it, fit to stir every pulse in the men of the Northern races, white or brown, that felt it, such was the setting of the "crowning victory."

The British were under arms in the sharp, raw cold of the dawn, ere the rising sun bathed the peaks in red, and by half-past seven commenced to advance in fighting formation, the three divisions of the army in line. The actual troops that were present were the two divisions that had taken part in the battle of Chillianwallah, with the troops from Multan added. There had been, however, some change in the commanders. The "order of battle" of the army was as follows:—

1st Division (Whish)	·	{ Markham's Brigade
		{ Harvey's Brigade
2nd Division (Gilbert)	·	{ Mountain's Brigade
		{ Penny's Brigade
		{ McLeod's Brigade
3rd Division (Campbell's)	·	{ Hoggan's Brigade
		{ Carnegie's Brigade
Bombay Column (Dundas)		

The cavalry had hitherto been formed into four brigades, but for the battle the 3rd Brigade was merged in Hearsey's and the whole under Sir J. Thackwell were brigaded as follows: 1st Brigade (White), four regiments; 2nd Brigade (Lockwood), two regiments; 4th Brigade (Hearsey), one regular, and five irregular corps. The 5th and 6th Light Cavalry from White's and Lockwood's Brigades, and the 45th and 69th N.I. from McLeod's and Carnegie's Brigades, formed the reserve and baggage guard, together with the Bombay Light Field Battery. The brigades consisted only of infantry, the artillery of the army

remained as what we should now call "army troops," under Brigadier-General J. Tennant, to be distributed as required on the day of battle. The exact number of guns is somewhat a matter of controversy, but it was probably eighty-eight. The actual troops and batteries present were nine troops of horse artillery, four light field batteries, and eighteen heavy guns distributed in four batteries. These latter were under the subordinate command of Brigadier Huthwaite. The doubt as to the exact number of guns is due to a want of clear record as to whether they were all at full strength after the losses at Chillianwallah and the formation of certain detachments.

The 4th troop in each brigade in the Bengal Horse Artillery was a native troop, and there were three native troops on the field. The light artillery was chiefly horse artillery. The troops of Warner, Duncan, and Huish were with the cavalry, the remainder distributed among the divisions, except Lane and Kindleside, who were at first in reserve.

The sappers and pioneers were commanded by Captain Siddons, Brigadier Cheape being the chief engineer with the army.

This battle, which we have now arrayed, was the last to be fought in India under the old conditions of dress and manœuvre. The last of the carefully dressed battle lines, with markers out. The last appearance of coatee and shako, and white cross belts, at any rate on the British side. The age of sun helmets and khaki, and cotton coats, and utility was approaching, and the Crimea was to lay the ghost of General Pipeclay. It was the last appearance of the staff in long blue frock coats, the last of the old panorama. It is true that Tombs' troop of horse artillery marched out of Meerut to the battles on the Hindun, and the siege of Delhi, one sultry morning in May of '57 in their brass helmets and dress jackets, but that passed to shirt-sleeves in no time. Even marching out, Tombs tore the high red collars from off the horse artillery jackets lest his men die of heat-stroke, and some even then thought the end of the



world was coming therefore. But Goojerat was the last to see it *en masse*.

The army was drawn up in the grey of the morning in the following order:—

*On the right.*—The 1st Division, Harvey's Brigade in the front line, Markham's in rear in support.

*In the centre.*—The 2nd Division, both brigades in line.

*On the left centre.*—The 3rd Division, McLeod's and Carnegie's Brigades in front, Hoggan's in support.

*On the left.*—Dundas' Bombay Brigade.

Thackwell's and White's Cavalry Brigades were on the left again, with Lockwood's and Hearsey's Brigades on the right. The artillery was for the most part distributed among the brigades between the intervals.

The British right was covered by the Chenab, and the Sikh left by a wet nullah which ran into that river. Parallel to the line of advance, and running through the centre of the British advance and the Sikh position, was a dry nullah. A dry nullah of the Punjab will be familiar to many. Here and there a pool sheltering a snipe or two, a teal or an old drake mallard, steep at the bends on one side and sloping grass on the other, with an odd mimosa-tree now and again, and a few sand-hillocks with jerboa rats scampering about, just the everyday *terrain* of the plain. Then again, over the valley of the Chenab, flights of *Kunj* or coulon or of wild geese disturbed by the troops wheel and return . . . just a peaceful morning scene with here and there a Gujar maiden with her goats. Then, in front of the British, the rising mound and high brick tenements of Goojerat, with the cluster of mud-houses below and reddening wall of snow behind. A mile in front of the town stood the village of Kalra *Kalan*, or Great Kalra, also called *Burra Kalra*, and a mile or so to the right Kalra *Khurd*, or Little Kalra, also called *Chota Kalra*, another village on the bank of the wet nullah. The main Sikh position was reported as running straight across the plain between the wet and dry nullahs, with its right thrown back along the dry nullah, and its left in the

village of Little Kalra. Great Kalra was held as an advanced post in advance of this position, which was between three and four miles in length. The greater portion of the Sikh and Afghan horse was stationed out on the Sikh right on the far side of the dry nullah. The Sikh forces, regular and irregular, were estimated at some 60,000, with 60 guns; the British numbered 20,000, with 88 guns.

At half-past seven in the morning, with the sun above the horizon and the whole panorama standing out in all its glory, the British army moved forward. It presented an appearance such as is only now to be seen at some big review. The troops in their British scarlet or blue, great masses of quarter-columns, with a forest of bayonets a-top, lines of moving guns, masses of formed horse, white belts and clean accoutrements catching the sun at every point. Pipe-clayed belts are an evil, no doubt, so great that no one dare say anything in their favour, but in the days when men fought in serried rank, and success meant the timely onward movement of masses of men into the teeth of belching guns, the psychical bond that this meticulous attention to trivialities undoubtedly called into being was of very genuine import. Even to this day the corps that are known to be always trustworthy are as neatly dressed and accoutred; though the cleaning process is simpler, than in those days of white belts and scarlet and gold in the field. As the white chalk-line will hypnotise the fowl, so did the white belts exercise over men's minds a discipline of a nature that suited many of the conditions of the day.

So the three British Divisions, with their attendant arms and services, moved forward at a steady pace, and as they moved those on the left and centre heard a curious rising sound away on the right. It was Lord Gough coming down the line in his well-known fighting coat (a white coat that covered his general's frock, and showed the world where to find him). The Commander rode and the soldiers cheered, cheered like mad for love of the little man and for other reasons. Cheer because it is good to raise a wave of enthusiasm when it is to be bayonet

and round-shot. Good to cheer because it has been cold and dreary waiting in the grey dawn and nerves are not at their best, also it is good to think, what you had really began to doubt, that you are a fine fellow ready to do anything, and so forth. And so the army cheered heartily, and felt the better for it, and as the Chief rode along the cheering rolled along the line, and borne on the breeze did, no doubt, assist to remind the Khalsa army of what the survivors had said of Sobraon. There are many, no doubt, who will remember just such a cheer spreading round the camps at Modder River when Lord Roberts rode round on his arrival there. That cheer also voiced various emotions, for armies are entities that only the skilled player can work on.

When the moving line had reached the village of Hariawallah, on the banks of the dry nullah, the Sikh gunners caught sight of the gun-elephants of the heavy batteries, and, their nerves being not quite at the old standard, opened a distant fire, which was not their wont. This revealed what had not been precisely known—viz., the exact locality of their main positions and of their batteries. At nine o'clock, when the British infantry were still out of range, the line halted and the British artillery now moved to the front. For two and a half hours the army possessed its soul in patience, while the guns hammered down the heavy Sikh metal and trundled round-shot through their reserves. That is one of the good points of the old round-shot artillery. If you did not hit what you aimed at, the ball went on, loblolly, with a hop and a skip, now taking off a leg, now trundling a lane through a column of horse, and till its last momentum was spent it had a power for evil. Not so the spattering shrapnel and the high explosive shell. Where they burst they lie.

As the sun stood at high twelve Lord Gough rushed two of the lighter batteries forward in the centre, close to the village of Great Kalra, and ordered General Gilbert to occupy that village. The advance of these guns drew a tremendous fire from some Sikh batteries behind it, and a heavy musketry fire

burst out from its walls (it had been imagined unoccupied) and the neighbouring hamlet of Kot Kalra. The 2nd Bengal Europeans from Penny's Brigade advanced to the storm, and finally captured the bigger village, but with very heavy loss, indeed the principal casualties of the day occurred here. With Kalra taken, the whole line pushed on, its guns moving with it, and the next severe piece of work was in front of Little Kalra (or Kalra *Khurd*) on the British right. This village was also strongly held and was carried by Harvey's Brigade, the 10th Foot leading, which likewise suffered heavily. Against our left, an attempt was now made to make a strong counter-attack, by the large masses of *Ghorcherras* (Sikh irregular horse) and Afghans supported by the Sikh infantry, from the bed of the dry nullah. This was, however, met by Campbell's Division, charged by the Scinde Horse and 9th Lancers, and pounded by Ludlow's field battery (No. 5), till it died away, and by one o'clock, without more resistance, the town of Goojerat, the whole of the Sikh position and their camps, were in our hands.

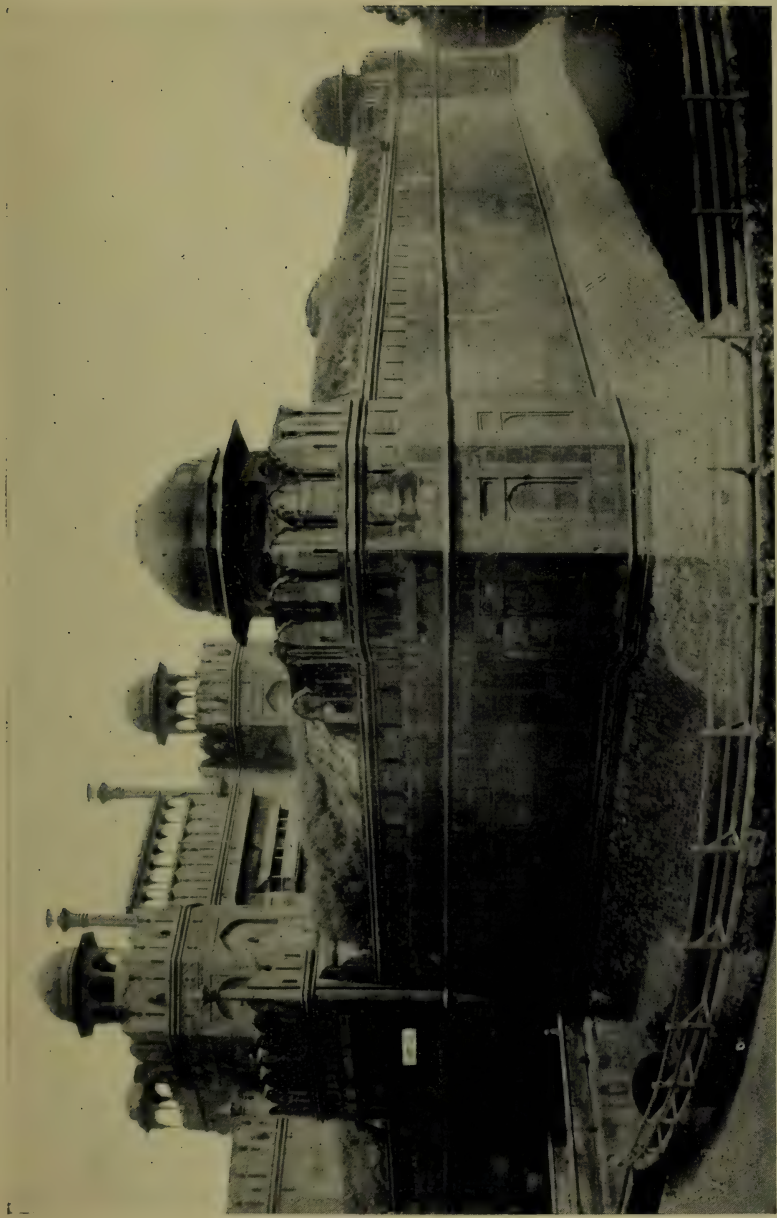
During the latter part of the advance, our right flank had been constantly threatened by the enemy's horse, and Hearsey's irregulars had made several charges. The moment that the Sikhs made off they were pursued by the whole of the cavalry, who moved in two columns, Hearsey and Lockwood following the enemy towards Bhimbur on the Rampur Tawi, and the cavalry under Thackwell driving them towards the Jhelum. Late in the afternoon the two cavalry bodies joined forces and returned to camp.

The Sikhs left fifty-three guns on the battlefield, and during the next two days eighteen more were recovered. The British loss consisted of ninety killed, including five British officers, and 700 wounded. The Sikh loss is not known, but the victory had been in every way satisfactory. The movements had been straightforward and simple, each division had been able to carry out its allotted part, and the artillery had been admirably served and had been superior to the usually heavy Sikh metal. The story of the housetop, to which Lord Gough was confined

by his staff hiding the ladder, has long been exploded. It was just one of those stories that appeal to the British. It reflected no opprobrium on the Commander in the eyes of the army, they loved to think of "Paddy" Gough as a fire-eater and a salamander, longing to hurl himself at the head of his line of bayonets at the enemy without waiting while the artillery beat down some of the opponent's power of resistance. The story has many versions in different guise. Some said that it was Henry Lawrence who had urged the Chief to use his artillery more, others that George Lawrence, when he came in from the Sikhs where he had been a prisoner, told him that the Sikhs also wondered why he did not use his guns. It is on record, too, that the Governor-General urged giving the artillery opportunity to produce an effect before commencing the advance to the attack. While we know on the recorded testimony of his staff, that Lord Gough was not kept from ordering an early attack by the device in the story, it is quite probable that the recommendations regarding the use of the artillery were made, but it does not thereby follow that they were necessary. The constitutional advisers of a commander are his staff, or rather the heads of its branches. In this case no doubt the branch of the staff concerned assisted in the preparation of the battle plans. No doubt, also, the artillery commanders were asked to give their views. It is absurd to suppose that these advisers did not as in duty bound recommend the due use of their artillery, and press for it should the Commander-in-Chief be inclined not to fully develop its powers. But these are all the inner workings of the machine, and a commander's action only becomes his defined policy as a result of the inner working of a machine organised for that end. To discuss it as it has been discussed in the past is to labour a trivial point. We do know that the enemy offered battle in the open, and that the British attacked in great order, using the full power of their augmented artillery, and that a crowning victory was won, which once and for all decided who was to rule in the plains of Upper India.

There are several well-known coloured prints that deal with the battle showing it as it was before the final advance, with the commanding town of Goojerat and the snowy background, and the British army formed in line for battle. One, by Lieutenant Simpson, of the 29th Foot, shows the whole scene with what must be very great accuracy. It is at the stage when the artillery is in front of the main British line pounding the Sikh line, and the infantry re-formed in long lines in rear. It is viewed from the rear of the centre of Gilbert's Division, with *Burra Kalra* to the right front. The party of Afghan horse, who succeeded in breaking through flanking cavalry, and who nearly got at the Commander-in-Chief himself, are shown in the foreground, and one is cutting at the defenceless lead-driver and coverer of an ammunition waggon belonging to a native troop of horse artillery. The N.C.O. is protecting his head with his right arm. Out in front are the heavy guns, and what is probably Dawes' light field battery (No. 17). The fortified walls and bastions of Goojerat are visible in rear of the Sikh line and away behind is the panorama of the snows. Another picture, from a drawing by Lieutenant Archer, of the 24th Foot, shows the same division (Gilbert's) advancing in quarter-column after the Sikhs had broken. They are close on the town of Goojerat, and the Sikh camp. Both these prints have sister pictures of the battle of Chillianwallah.

The casualties of the battle in proportion to the numbers engaged and the importance of the victory were comparatively few, far less than in all previous battles with the Sikhs. They were, however, heavy in certain units, Penny's Brigade, both the European and native corps, losing heavily in front of *Burra Kalra*, and Harvey's Brigade in front of *Chota Kalra*. Thus the 2nd Bengal Europeans lost one officer and eight men killed, and five officers and 137 men wounded with three missing; while the 71st Native Infantry lost eleven men killed and one British officer, and 131 native officers and men wounded. The 10th Foot and 8th Native Infantry had considerable casualties also. It was to a great extent an artillery battle, and the artillery



THE LAHORE GATE OF THE DELHI PALACE FORT

The verandah overhanging the inner gate is that of the *Killedar's* Quarters, where Captain Douglas and his guests were murdered, 11th May, 1857 (v.p. 169)





losses were heavy, especially in Fordyce's and MacKenzie's troops. The artillery losses were two British officers and twenty-seven of all ranks killed, and one British officer and eighty-two of other ranks wounded. The casualties among the artillery horses and gun-bullocks were 127.

So much for the battle itself. Immediately it was over, as has been stated, the cavalry took up the pursuit, and inflicted considerable loss. It is recorded that the men felt very acutely the cruel slashing to death of the wounded as they lay out in the scrub after Chillianwallah (pitiful stories of this are told in Archer's narrative, including the horrible cruelties to a wounded drummer boy), and the cavalry were out for vengeance. The next day General Gilbert started with a selected force in pursuit of the remainder, viâ the Khoree Pass, gradually overtaking guns and formed bodies, till finally, on the 16th of March, the whole of the Sikh army gave up its guns and surrendered its arms at Rawal Pindi. A further force had pursued the Afghan allies of the Sikhs across the Indus and into the Khaiber, the last Afghan being back into his own country exactly one month after the battle of Goojerat.

Then followed the annexation of the Punjab, and the gradual settling down of the country, with the hasty apportioning of temporary cantonments and the getting of the men under cover before the approaching fury of a Punjab summer. How the army of all ranks "groused" and grumbled at the hardships and changes of the next twelve months is another story, and we may leave the triumphant and vindicated Commander-in-Chief to settle these matters and prepare for the relinquishing of his command after having taken his army victorious through the two Sikh campaigns, and the short decisive Gwalior campaign. Hindustan from Cape Comorin to the Afghan border now acknowledged the British to be the paramount power, and there remained no external enemy to fear at all. So, as many had prophesied, with or without reason, the army had eventually to fight itself, when the native army of Bengal itself blew up, taking with it some of its neighbours.

The story of the arrival of Sir Charles Napier, hastily despatched when the misconception and heavy losses of Chillianwallah had stirred men's minds, must be referred to. It was, of course, a great blow to Lord Gough to feel that he had been superseded, however much the Government might try and disguise the pill. It was, too, especially inconvenient since the season of the year prevented him leaving India for some months after he had handed over his command. The old hero had to remain on in Simla till the autumn, before making what proved to be a triumphal progress down the country. The difficult relations which such a position might easily have produced seem to have been admirably avoided by all concerned, and when the old soldier finally got home, his reception was all that he could have wished for.

The troops taking part in the campaign received the 'Punjab' medal with clasps for Multan, Chillianwallah and Goojerat. The second of these was only granted on the very urgent demand of Lord Gough, who successfully combated the view that Chillianwallah was anything else but a victory, and the preparation for the "Crowning mercy." The medal inscribed "To the Army of the Punjab" had on the *reverse* a representation of the Sikh Sirdars laying down their arms to Sir Walter Gilbert, behind whom is shown the army drawn up in line. It was worn with a dark blue ribbon with yellow edges. *Was*, because not even one of those who stood foursquare to the storm, on the plains of Chillianwallah and Goojerat, still answer to their names throughout the length and breadth of the Empire. The last a troop-sergeant Major of the 14th Light Dragoons, who had been with his corp at Chillianwallah and the pursuit of the Afghans to the Khaibar, died in March 1932, at the age of 104.

NOTE:—The Afghans referred to are 5,000 horse under Sirdar Akram Khan sent by the Amir Dost Muhammad to assist his hereditary foes the Sikhs, no doubt with the view of regaining Peshawar for himself, had the British been defeated.



*[From a painting by Colonel Lucombe*

THE BENGAL HORSE ARTILLERY GALLOPING THROUGH AFGHAN  
HORDES, 1842

*[Face page 158*



## X

### THE INDIAN MUTINY

#### I. DAWN AT DELHI

(May 11th, 1857)

*“North was the garden where Nicholson slept;  
South was the sweep of a battered wall.”*

—LYALL.

THE restoration of Delhi to her place as the capital of India, after several generations in the wilderness, has stirred public interest in the history that surrounds it. It has a history before which that of ancient Rome even appears trivial. Far back in the ages long, long before Alexander of Macedon crossed the Hydaspes, or Hannibal passed the Alps, or ever Romulus slew his brother, Delhi under other names was the capital of a powerful organised kingdom. City after city has risen on the ruins of its predecessor like the successive ruins of ancient Troys, but always to more purpose. For miles round the city the dust is the ashes of dead generations. For many a square mile the whole plain is covered with ancient cemeteries, and the very dust devils whirl the ashes of Afghan and Mogul in high spirals and eccentric circles. For miles round, the old imperial suburbs are dotted with ruined tombs and mansions. Tombs, forts, temples, minarets, and domes dot the horizon in every direction. A centre for the globe-trotter, maps, guide-books, picture post-cards, and the like abound. Since the making of new Delhi the traveller's interest is even more stimulated. The Indian public, the European portion of it, are now studying their own history of Delhi too, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the folk who made it.

To them and the traveller a dim drop scene exists in the background on which are mingled Raja Prithwi, the Slave Kings, the Ghilzai and Pathan dynasties, and then the great Mogul Emperors, all about the same relationship to each other, as time goes, as that given by the schoolboy to Julius Cæsar and William the Norman. The story has just been told of the first battle of Delhi, so far as the English are concerned, when General Lake beat the French trained battalions of the Mahratta in 1803, hard by Indarpat, within sight of the minarets of the capital. It has been told that while there is a clasp for "Delhi" on the Mutiny medal, there are clasps for "Battle of Delhi," and "Defence of Delhi," on the famous old "Army of India" medal, the latter referring to a very wonderful defence of the immense *enceinte* of the city of Colonels Ochterlony and Burn, with a few sepoy battalions against the whole host of Holkar, when General Lake had gone south to find this same Holkar who had doubled on him.

But it is the connection of Delhi with the great tragedy of the Mutiny that is ever fresh in the minds of visitors. Every visitor must drive through the battered Kashmir Gate, every one goes to the Ridge to see the monuments. During the Durbar the Ridge was thronged, and on the day of the King's entry the whole of the artillery present were formed up on its stony faces to thunder 101 salvoes "lest they forget." Oh yes! the great drama of that wonderful siege and its happenings is fairly well known, and of late we have been treated to extremely interesting reflogging of the old waters as to whether or no General Sir Archdale Wilson was or was not a man of character, or merely a tired and gallant old soldier who tried to do his duty without being very well equipped by nature to do so. If only the latter, why, then let us accord the more credit, for most soldiers understand, even if they don't talk about it, that not every one who dons a red coat thereby becomes a leader of men. Therefore he who can compel the Kings of Orion, and achieve any measure of success, when not naturally so gifted, is worthy of great admiration and sympathy. Once

again "the toad beneath the harrow knows exactly where each tooth-point goes," and soldiers know what goes on under the mask of a sun-dried face and a grizzled moustache. Such controversy however is always good, if well conducted. "Soldier know thyself" is an essential motto, and to discuss others in all courtesy and sympathy is to learn.

However, all that is merely by the way, and brings us to the real point of this chapter, and that is that, while men read eagerly and study the ancient history and the story of the grim limpet English on their ridge, they almost forget the real romance of the story. They do not follow in all its intense tragedy the opening hours of that fateful Monday, May 11th, 1857, and the extraordinary dramatic opening of the scene. Extraordinary because so simple, so gradual, and then so intent. Everyone, of course, knows of the great event that will always live in history, the blowing up of a portion of the magazine by the devoted *personnel* of the Ordnance Department. Something of the tragedy of the mainguard by the Kashmir Gate is also known, but little of the commencement. The scene is worth reconstructing.

A few years ago there was a feeling prevailing that it would be well to let the past bury the past, to let all men and all races think only of the great effort both Government and public were making for the progress and prosperity of the peoples of India. But there is now a very persistent party of Indians who will not let bygones be bygones, who openly talk of the Mutiny as a war of freedom, and are endeavouring to reproduce it. Therefore it is well that our people should never forget the signs and portents and happenings, and draw their lessons therefrom. Those who care for the strange romance of it all will always ponder over the lesser happenings, and try to recreate the atmosphere, and since the other side is revelling in its memories with true Indian illogic, the romanticists may enjoy their sensations guiltlessly.

May, 1857, was a cool month as Indian Mays go. The whole of that summer, it is recorded, was a phenomenally cool one.

Folk, European folk, found tents in northern India bearable in June, when as a rule they are fiery furnaces. Many a small item was cast in our favour in that eventful year, from the changing of the hour of church parade at Meerut to the early coming of the rains.

But the coolness of a cool Indian May is only a matter of comparison. At the best of times the weather would be hot, and the Europeans had settled down to their hot-weather hours and programme of daily business. A few of the women and children had gone to the hills. In these days it would have been ninety per cent. The country was queer, there was no doubt about that, but to the ordinary mind not more so than would furnish something out of the normal to discuss at mess and at the station club. Officers had been passing through on their way to their regiments on completing their musketry courses at the rifle depots of Sialkot and Umballa. The gossip from the schools, which alone had the new rifle, regarding the incidents of the greased cartridges, had come into the station first-hand. Everybody however was sure that their "Jacks" would take these cartridges all right, and that the trouble was only in certain "slack" regiments. The Mangal Pandey incident was already ancient history, he and his native officer had been hanged, and so forth. The talk was far more of who could get to Kashmir, and whether the quail were in, in large numbers. There had of course been this silly trouble with the 3rd Cavalry at Meerut, but the court-martial was just over. The native officers of the Delhi garrison who had gone to serve on it had returned the day before.

So on the Monday morning, early, according to the routine of the hot season, everyone had gone to his work. Up in the cantonments behind the Ridge the garrison had paraded to hear the sentence on *Jemadar* Isaree Pandey<sup>1</sup> read out according to custom. The troops had been dismissed, but the ordinary barrack routine was in progress. Quite how the first com-

<sup>1</sup> Executed for not preventing Mangal Pandey shooting the adjutant of the 34th at Barrackpore.



munication arrived to the civil magistrates that something was wrong is not known. It is almost certain that Mr. Fraser, the commissioner, had news of some sort early, and had sent a message up to the brigadier. It is said that a party of horsemen, presumably in file, were seen galloping along the road from Meerut towards the bridge of boats over the Jumna. Whatever the news was, it induced Mr. Simon Fraser, the commissioner, and Mr. Hutchinson, the collector, to proceed at once to the Calcutta Gate and have it closed. That is the gate close under the Selimgarh where the main railway line from Ghaziabad now enters the city. This was probably between 7 and 8 a.m., when the sun was full high and the heat of the day already threatening.

Now, the story will be remembered of how the mutineers of the 3rd Light Cavalry galloped to the palace,<sup>1</sup> calling on the old King to admit them and raise his standard. The exact story of what occurred is of very great interest. It will be remembered that it was Captain Douglas, of the King's Guard, who first interviewed the mutineers and ordered them away and to present their petition in due form. Captain Douglas belonged to the 31st Bengal Native Infantry, and was commandant of the Palace Guards, a numerous force, dressed in some imitation of the Bengal Line. We know very little about them, though from the fact that they were commanded by a British officer (who was also on political duty connected with the King) we may be sure that this corps resembled in its drill and routine one of our own native regiments. It was certain to have been recruited from Oude for the most part. What manner of man the commandant was, history does not say, though no doubt there are relatives of his living who could tell us. We may imagine him like so many of the younger political officers found by the army, especially energetic and competent, with some considerable sympathy with the fallen fortunes of the Mogul family. His work in connection with all the retainers and royal relatives, with their thousand claims, intrigues, and

<sup>1</sup> The Fortress-palace also known as the Delhi Fort.

quarrels, must have been considerable. What the state of affairs within the palace in ordinary times was, has been very clearly drawn by Mrs. Steel in her wonderful book *On the Face of the Waters*.

Douglas lived in the quarters over the Lahore or main gate of the palace, the one through which the royal procession passed in 1911. Those who ordinarily read the account of this morning at Delhi imagine him as appearing at his window or balcony above the gate, and thence ordering some excited troopers down below to go away and not disturb the King at this early hour. Mr. Fanshawe, recently Commissioner of Delhi, in his *Delhi Past and Present*, has gone into this matter of detail, evidently struck with the peculiar interest of it, not thinking that His Majesty's action at the Durbar would make it even more interesting. Possibly Captain Douglas at an early hour had conversation at the Lahore Gate with one of the mutineer horsemen, little knowing, of course, his real status, but this was not the occasion on which the mutineers of the 3rd Light Cavalry called on the King to protect and lead them. Later, exactly when it is impossible to say, the first arrivals from Meerut in any number, cavalry troopers again, crossed the Jumna either by the ford or the bridge of boats, and, finding the Calcutta Gate already closed against them, turned into the *kadir*, the wide, scrub-covered flats which border the actual river. On this side the walls of the palace overhang the river-bed, and on the edge of these walls, on the raised interior, stood and still stand the Royal apartments. The Diwan-i-Khas,<sup>1</sup> the Royal Bath, and the Moti Musjid<sup>2</sup> look out over the river to catch such breeze as may be moving. The space in the bed below is known as the "*Zer Jharoka*," literally, "beneath the windows," a recognised palace expression applied generally to a space beneath the Royal or Imperial apartments from which the Kings could show themselves to the public at certain fixed times.

It was to this "*Zer Jharoka*," to be attained without forcing

<sup>1</sup> Private hall.

<sup>2</sup> Pearl mosque.

any guard or gate, that the troopers betook themselves, entirely in accordance with Oriental custom, to call on the King to protect them and place himself at their head and win back an Indian crown. It is this incident that people generally imagine to have happened below the Lahore Gate, the main gate of the fortress-palace (far away from the river), above which were Captain Douglas's quarters. The mutineers knew that the King lived immediately above the place from which they clamoured, and could show himself to them from the Musamman Burj, a small tower projecting slightly from the wall into the river-bed. From this tower, or close to it, a small staircase and wicket led down to the river-bed itself. Below this Musamman Burj, then, the troopers of the 3rd Light Cavalry stood fresh from the murder of their officers and their families at Meerut—fierce, frightened, exalted, despairing, in their alternating moods.

It was from this same Musamman Burj that His Majesty King George and his consort Queen Mary looked down, in their golden crowns, on the assembled thousands of the multitude the day that they held their garden court in the palace grounds of the Mogul Emperors in the year of Our Lord 1911.

The old King, aroused by the clamour from below, wanted some one else to lean on. He must well have known what was brewing, but had no idea whether these were successful or fugitive rebels. He at once sent for Captain Douglas, who hurried thither along the covered way from the main gate with its long row of bazaar stalls. One may pause to wonder if the Royal gardener gave him the usual buttonhole offering as he crossed the lawns. Joining the aged King, it is understood that he wished to go down the wicket steps and talk to the men below. This the King would not permit. So he addressed them from the top of the wall by the Musamman Burj, bidding them not disturb His Majesty, but if they had a petition to present to come later to the *Kotwali*. The troopers then, after uttering some insolence or abuse, one actually unslinging his

carbine and firing at Douglas, galloped off to the Raj Ghat Gate of the city and thence into the open space between the palace and the city. Some commenced attacking any Europeans to be found in the adjoining civil station of Daryagunj ("the suburb on the river"). Others galloped along past the Lahore Gate of the palace, to the Culcutta Gate of the city.

We may here profitably turn aside from the main story to compare the two scenes below the Musamman Burj. First, that scene just depicted: the Jumna *kadir* lying below the *terrepleine* of the palace, the opposite banks and distance shimmering in the haze, and heavy with the dust raised by the troopers' horses. The bridge of boats, half a mile or so away, with its stream of laden bullocks and thronging peasantry attending the markets of the city. To the left, jutting out from the palace wall, the frowning old bastioned fort known as the Selingarh. To the right, beyond the end of the wall, the minarets of the Golden Mosque, and the English bungalows hugging the crest of the river-bed—bungalows in which the wives and families of the residents were about sitting down to breakfast, unconscious of any danger. Down on the short turf below the walls a knot of, perhaps, fifty troopers of the Light Cavalry, clad for the most part in their famous French-grey regimentals, with perhaps a *puggaree* on their head in lieu of the regulation dragoon shako.—This blue-grey is the colour worn till 1914 by the only three regiments of the old Light Cavalry left in the Indian Army—the 26th, 27th, and 28th, until recently the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Madras Light Cavalry. It was the uniform of a force that considered itself *corps d'élite* and which, during the Mutiny, was so well known to our troops, as being constantly opposed to them.—On the wall above, the captain of the guard, alone, or almost alone, save, perhaps for an orderly of his guard. Behind the marble grille in the marble buildings, on the wall, the trembling old relic of a once all-powerful dynasty: the captain, firm and resolute, ordering the men away to present their petition in due form, the troopers excited, defiant, gesticulating! He died within the

hour, and few of the actors survived the siege, so the details are scanty, but he who roams the deserted palace may read.

Then the second scene: the same rose-red fortress-palace, the same Jumna *kadir*, the same Musamman Burj and marble buildings, the same wonderful India around. Not, however, the one solitary Englishman in white braided jacket and his solitary sword. On the tower the British Emperor of India and his Empress in their crowns and robes. Around them the highest princes and nobles of India, and all the officers of the army of the North, all the governors, the judges, and the magistrates. Below, thousands on tens of thousands of his Indian subjects, marching up towards him in two great streams side by side, divided by a fence, Hindus on one side, Muhammadans on the other, and then wheeling past him outwards with every sign of enthusiasm. The Indian understands the meaning of the word *Badshah* (an emperor), and the outward and visible sign of power and protection . . . the great ruler under whom folk live their lives in security, each as he will. For many hundred years India had not seen peace, for in the last generations of the Empire all was unrest, and the last of the Emperors, only Emperors in name—the last of them not even that. So the real *Badshah* himself, with all the signs of power around him, was to them a sign that the sun should shine and the rain rain in due season. And so long as peace be preserved, what more could a simple people ask for?

So there you have the contrast. The great King of a great people—who, though partly fetish and partly fools to many of their dark-skinned fellow-subjects, try to rule in the name of truth and justice and righteousness—with the tens of thousands of his people below him. On the other, the fierce flushed faces of the excited soldiery, fresh from murder and broken faith, stirred for the moment with religious enthusiasm and the glamour of an act of war, calling on the aged descendant of an ancient dynasty, parleying with a solitary English officer, who claimed to represent the ancient potentate! A curious contrast

beneath the same sky, and above the same marble and red granite plinths!

And so mutiny, raging and uncurbed, had come to Delhi, ever the centre of Empire, as the loadstone points to the northward.

By this time a message had come to Douglas from Mr. Fraser to join him at the Calcutta Gate of the city. So leaving the Royal presence and the aged King to his courtiers and anxieties, the captain of the guard returned to the Lahore Gate, across the quiet lawns outside the Royal quarters, with the drowsy splash of the fountains and the murmur of doves alone disturbing the atmosphere. Possibly he returned to his cool quarters high above the old main gateway of the palace-fort, to further arm himself, and perhaps to tell his guests for the week-end that there was some mysterious disorder afoot. The guests were Mr. Jennings, the chaplain of Delhi, with his daughter and her friend Miss Clifford. Possibly he may not have considered anything serious was amiss, and, having his sword on him, did not go up to his quarters for a fire-arm, but passed out under the cool, dark, double gateway. We can picture the gate-guard turning out to him, possibly in all faith, probably with their tongues in their cheeks, and can almost see the line of red coats and slovenly placed cross-belts, copying the ceremony of the British guard. Out on to the glacis then passed the captain, and hurried to the Calcutta Gate. The troopers of the cavalry, riding up to the palace gate a few minutes later, would have learnt from the guard that their commander had passed out. At the city gate, which they had closed, Douglas found Fraser, the commissioner of Delhi, and Hutchinson, the collector. The usual military guard was at the gate, found that day, as also the guards at the Kashmir Gate, which was the main guard, and at the Magazine, by the 38th Native Infantry from the cantonments. Sir Theophilus Metcalfe, the joint magistrate, had been at the gate also, but had gone off to the *kotwali*, where the central police-station was. The troopers followed Douglas round the glacis

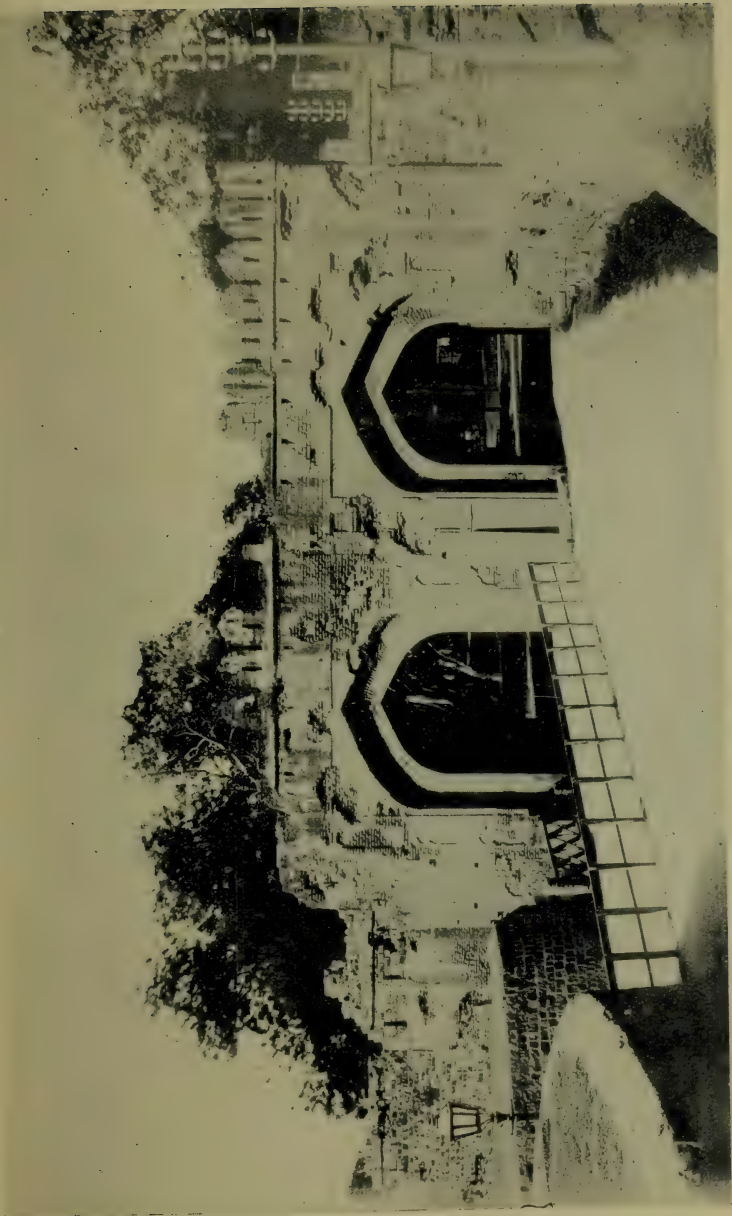
of the fort to the Calcutta Gate, and at once attacked the little group of sahibs, the 38th guard remaining passive or fraternising. Mr. Hutchinson was cut down, the commissioner's own escort of Jhajjar sowars remained inactive, and Mr. Fraser seized a carbine from one of them and shot dead a trooper of the 3rd Light Cavalry. Breaking through them in his trap, lashing his horse to a gallop, he succeeded in getting his wounded companion to the Lahore Gate, where Douglas, who had jumped down into the fort ditch, joined them with a badly injured ankle. Some servants and *chaprassis* eventually carried the wounded men up into the quarters, where the chaplain and the two English girls were sitting anxiously, and whence the former had been watching with his telescope the movement on the Meerut road. Outside and in the palace the whirlwind was rising, the quiet morning cries of the muezzin from the mosques was changing. From "Prayer is better than sleep," the call had risen to a fiercer key. "Glory for all and heaven for those who bleed," the call of militant Islam. "Din! Din! Victory of Muhammad!" A Moslem city, like an Irish one, is agog for religious riot. Out in the suburb of Daryagunj mutineers and bazaar riff-raff were indulging in the novel sport of baiting and murdering Europeans and Christians. Inside the palace a crowd had gathered in the gateway at the entrance to Douglas's quarters. Mr. Fraser had harangued them, and it is recorded that Douglas had sent an urgent message to the King to send a gun down to the Lahore Gate, and also to send litters to take the two English ladies to the protection of the Royal ladies' quarters. Whatever was done was too late. As Fraser turned to go up the stairs, some one of the crowd, said to be an Abyssinian—there were adventurers from all lands in the palace following—by others a lapidary, struck him down. It was enough; the crowd, then eager for blood, rushed up the staircases to the commandant's quarters: the Englishmen's servants, as was so often the case, strove to save their masters, and closed the doors against the mob. Unfortunately, there was another entrance and stairway, or

it is just possible something might have intervened at any rate to save the ladies. What further happened is all conjecture and the reports of eye-witnesses. The whole of the small party were ruthlessly massacred then and there, and all British authority within the palace died.

Outside, the story comes within the facts of common and more popular knowledge, the portion of our Delhi history that we read. There were the massacres in Daryagunj, the defence of the roof of the bank by the Beresfords, the killings in the bungalows—bungalows which are inhabited to this day, and which are redolent of old-world India and its romance. The murders over the Lahore Gateway must have made the court party furiously to think. Something, chance or else the plotting of some supreme brain, had involved those who toyed and trifled with rebellion beyond all extrication. Nothing remained now but for the Royal, nay the Imperial family, to top the wave with such acumen and courage as they might. The aged King had little to look for in this world. The imprisonment and death in Burma, had he seen it, could have little fears for him—but the princes? Did they dream of that scene at the *kotwali*, where Hodson was to fling their corpses to lie in merited dishonour? Did Zeenat Mahal, the youngest wife, and Jiwan Bakht, her spoiled son, feel the ignominy of failure ahead? We may be certain that their feelings were more than mixed when the litters, sent in answer to Douglas's summons, came back with the report, "Too late!" But raw, red blood and cruel murder were no new sight to the rose-red granite walls of the fortress-palace, and the scenes of slaughter on that day, within its walls, and again when a few days later half a hundred nondescript Christian pitifuls were despatched, were of little account on the accumulated negatives of Time.

So came the mutiny pell-mell to the Imperial Palace in the rising heat of a May morning seventy-five years ago. So died the captain of the guard in his own gatehouse with his guests and his colleagues, while over in the cantonments and at the





THE KASHMIR GATE OF DELHI CITY

As battered during the siege in 1857. It was within this that stood the "Main Guard," and it was here that the frightened ladies assembled on 11th May, and the 38th Guard mutinied.



mainguard by the Kashmir Gate the drama grew in intensity. The rest of the story is an evergreen memory, but folk are apt to forget the long dreary spinning of Time on its rosary through the heat and the dust of that day. By ten of the morning, the English dead lay neglected in the Lahore Gateway, but it was not till 4 p.m. that Willoughby blew up the magazine as a protest and as a promise. It was not till nightfall that the last of the English left the cantonments to the sullen remnants of the mutinous regiments. From 10 a.m. till the destruction of the magazine at 4 p.m. our people had been collecting in the mainguard or the flagstaff tower, that still stands on the ridge, waiting with their dead, ever waiting, for the white troops to come from Meerut.

Let the visitors whose hired carriages rumble through the Lahore Gateway think of the scene enacted there that far-away morning, and then, as they pass on to the marble apartments over the *Zer Jharoka* over the Jumna shore, think again of the mutinous grey-clad troopers below the very tower that the guide will tell them the King of the English sat on to see his million peoples in the year of grace 1911. In India, history is made so fast. The great Durbar is already ancient history; Lord Kitchener and Lord Curzon are almost solar myths. Let them forget these if they like, but let them ever remember the captain of the guard and his companions, because in that great task of raising India from where she had fallen, we may again have to face a storm, possibly of greater, possibly of less, dimensions than that of '57. Since the multitudes pressed their foreheads on the steps of King George's daïs, King George's delegate has been bombed within sight of that old Lahore Gate. All the old evil is still at work, to embitter and to ruin the slow work of building up a flourishing people from the war-racked ruins of ancient races. Once again may we have to stand four-square to the devil's wind, amid tumult and calumny. It is the avowed intention of the Indian fanatics that '57 shall not be buried in oblivion, as we would have buried it. So we may well use the memory to our own warning.

Clumsy we are to handle a strange people, but straight and honest and just according to our lights.

And over the red granite walls of that ancient evil palace and fort rise the great masts of the "Wireless" that show to the wise that, after all, the English are still there. As a sign that still, as ran the call of the old town crier,

"Mankind belongs to God,  
and the land to the Government,  
and power to the powerful *sahibs*."

## II. THE MASTER-GUNNER

This story of an incident in the Indian Mutiny, a side-light that is not in the histories, was told me by an old lady who lived in a large bungalow in a cantonment long abandoned by the army. The old master-gunner who was put to such a trial was her father.

. . . . .

In the pitiless heat of the June following the month in which the storm had burst on the unsuspecting English, a small British garrison was defending a huge rambling fort, that contained half the equipments of an army, and kept open the communications by the Ganges, with Calcutta and the provinces of the North. On its successful defence hung the fate of a dozen and more similarly defended spots up country. The garrison consisted of a weak company of one of the European regiments of the Honourable East India Company, of fifty men of a Sikh Irregular Corps yet loyal to their recent conquerors, a dozen invalid artillerymen of a veteran battalion, and a few local officials, European and Eurasians. Added to these were the surviving English officers from a brigade that had mutinied in the adjacent cantonment. Perhaps a hundred and fifty women and children completed the anxieties of the aged Brigadier, who had assumed command instead of having been in the enjoyment of his pension for ten years past. In

John Company's days you kept in harness till you died, and the oldest private became the youngest corporal, and so on up the hierarchy, till a general of division would number eighty summers. So it was no small wonder that the military card-house, that had succeeded the fighting armies of Lake and Wellesley and Monro, should topple when the wind rose, and had been the laughing-stock of good soldiers for twenty years before the mutiny.

Thus if the old Brigadier had been unequal to the situation it was small blame to him, who had spent all his life in the services of our grim stepmother—more of his life than she or any other employer had right to. Fortunately there were ready and loyal hands and heads to help him through, in the shape of an officer of artillery in charge of the fort, and a captain of irregular cavalry, so that the defence was well organised and the non-combatants and refugees suitably housed and controlled.

Outside, three battalions of mutinous infantry, some cavalry, and all the scum of the countryside, after pillaging the cantonment and civil station, and burning all Government buildings, had sat down to besiege the place of refuge. And all the while the column of mercury in the magazine verandah crept up and up, till the thermometer stood at one hundred and ten degrees, and the Europeans on the wall peered out through their sun-scorched eyes, and the women gasped in the casements below the bastions, and all thanked Heaven that the guns had been within the fort, and that there had been no artillery to mutiny with the rest of the brigade.

On the fifth morning after the mutiny, as the Brigadier and his artillery officer staggered round the fort, revived by the slight drop in temperature that must come after even the hottest night, they saw a puff of smoke spray out from the tank by the native infantry quarter guard, followed by the unmistakable hum of a round-shot, which struck the parapet near by the main entrance. A few minutes later, a second crashed through the upper portion of the iron-bound door

of the main gateway, to be followed by the whistling of a shell from a nine-inch mortar, which landed fairly in the centre yard.

The gunner looked at the Brigadier, and the Brigadier swore aloud. Despite his seventy years and growing infirmities, the brave old man had succeeded in pulling himself together, and was now as determined as a man in his prime, as became an officer who had been through the Sikh and Afghan wars and had been one of the "Illustrious Garrison,"<sup>1</sup> who had, moreover, carried a pair of colours at the capture of Bhurtpur. But the walls of the old fort sadly needed repair, and while broken bottles kept thieves from the magazine, a very few days' pounding would bring them down like paper. However, it was a case for "dogged does it," and all the troops not on guard and all the followers and refugees were put to make sacks and fill them with earth, till sandbags were piled high against the gates, and spare heaps were collected at intervals.

Where the guns had come from was a puzzle, and still more so whence had come the skilled gunner who was pointing them so accurately. Twice had the flagstaff been shot down from atop the main guard, and four times running had the main gate itself been struck. Twice also had shell dropped on to the magazine roof, only to be rolled off by a faithful Lascar. Presently news filtered in that the guns had been sent down the Jumna (by boat) by Rajah Kunwar Singh, who had joined the mutineers and declared for the Mogul puppet at Delhi. Two good twelves had he sent, a nine-inch mortar, and four three-pounders, but as he had no artillerymen, that did not account for the good shooting. Fortunately, though the besiegers surrounded the fort and kept up a musketry fire, they had no stomach for a direct assault, content to receive every rush of rumbling masonry that followed a successful shot with loud cheers. And all the while the invalid artillerymen, assisted by the Sikhs, plied the fort six-pounders, and men dropped senseless in the morning sun, and women and

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* of Jalalabad.

children died in the casements, and all looked wearily for help from below. In the garrison a wild tale had gone about that there were renegade white gunners helping the enemy, and presently a native came in to say that Pat Delahaney himself was working the rebel guns. Now Pat Delahaney was an ex-sergeant of Bengal Horse Artillery, a member of the Invalid Battalion, of which a detachment was stationed at the fort, representing the settlement of old military pensioners, who had elected to remain in India on the veteran establishment. Of the dozen old artillerymen, all were within the fort except Delahaney, who had been away in the district visiting a married daughter at the time of the rising. He had been the best known shot with a six-pounder in all the horse artillery for the last twenty years, and when it was reported that he had turned renegade, the success of the rebel guns was explained.

Furious was the little garrison inside at the idea of his treachery, loud were the threats of vengeance, and accurately laid were the fort guns that replied to the fire from the tank.

Sergeant James M'Gillivray, however, who commanded the detachment of invalid gunners, would have none of it, for Delahaney was his bosom friend. "A divil of an O'Brien bhoy he is, soor, throe for you; and why wouldn't he be, for his father was hung on College Green," cried he to the Brigadier; "but divil a rebel would he be, and join thim black blagyards, glory be to God, sorr."

But for all that M'Gillivray could say, the story was believed, and when that afternoon six shots running struck the gateway, and the whole arch fell down, even that staunch champion was staggered.

"'Tis moighty foine shooting. Oi've known Delahaney stroike the bull eight toimes out of noine at a thousand yards. Mother av God, fwhat will oi du if me old chum's there?"

But Delahaney or nigger, the fact remained, and all the garrison could do was to see their refuge battered about their ears, and reply as best they could, repairing their damage night by night, and burying their dead, while the dust whirled

and eddied in the corners by the bastions and the white wheel guide-posts, and the pale children, despite the heat, played on the chains under the siris trees, and dodged Mr. Delahaney's round-shot, as now all openly called them.

It was on the morning of the ninth day, after a night more fiercely oppressive than its fore-runners, when a shot had come into a casement and killed a woman and two children, and the garrison was down to a turn, that a flourish of bugles was heard in the trees south of the fort, followed by the roar of cannon and rattle of musketry. The garrison hurried to the ramparts in time to see the red coatees and white cross-belts of the mutineers scuttling about in the jungle near, and doubling away across the maidan, then to break and return pursued—yes, actually pursued—by European cavalry, closely followed by European infantry, who fired as they ran, to the music of quavering cheers from the old fort walls. It was a poor stand for three of the best battalions of the Bengal line to make against a third of their number, but a guilty conscience is a poor ally, and the English were more than angry. They are usually so steady and sleepy that folk had forgotten then, as they sometimes forget now, how very angry the English can get, if it really is worth while being so.

In half an hour's time the red coatees and white cross-belts had all disappeared, except for a couple of hundred or so who had the misfortune to be taken prisoners, and General Neil himself and his bluecap Lambs were forming up half mad with thirst at the battered main gate, which eager hands were busy clearing. The first man of action had arisen, and already light was beginning to show through the clouds to all India, while those in the fort had almost forgotten there was an outer world.

As Neil and the Brigadier shook hands, amid the cheers of the defenders and the relievers, a sergeant hurried up to the General. "Beg pardon, sir, we've caught a European a-working the niggers' guns, sir."

"Did you kill him?" asked the General, laconically.



"No, sir," said the sergeant. "The lieutenant said we was to keep him."

"Damn the lieutenant," was all the General said, for his mind was full of other matters. "Put him in the fort guard."

And so Patrick Delahaney, half dazed with sun and drink, was shoved into the fort guard amid the execrations of the defenders. He had worked the two rebel twelves for four days, and Sergeant James M'Gillivray was allowed to go and see him. The story of shame he heard was this, and it was fully expanded by a half-caste medical subordinate whom the rebels had spared and forced to serve them.

Delahaney, driving back in a buggy from visiting his daughter, had been seized by the mutineers and dragged before Ressaldar Major Ramzan Khan of the Irregular Horse, who by virtue of seniority after the order of the Company, as well as his fanatical partisanship for the new rule, commanded the rebel brigade. That very day had Kunwar Singh's guns arrived by boat, and Delahaney's fame as a gunner was well known. It was therefore proposed to him that he, for untold gold, should join the rebels and train their gunners under commission from the Padishah at Delhi. Delahaney's refusal had been direct, and highly coloured with picturesque Hibernian blasphemy, daring them to kill him if they wished, and be d——d to them.

But, willy-nilly, Delahaney's services the mutineers were determined to have, so that he was then and there tied up to the wheel of one of Kunwar Singh's long twelves, and flogged by the drummers of the grenadier company till even his spirit gave way and he became insensible. The next morning he was given food and a large tot of rum, and again tied up to the gun wheel. "Will you now fire the guns?" he was asked, and on refusing the flogging recommenced. The heart of the man was broken, though he had often enough taken a flogging in his youth like any decent Irish soldier . . . but in his old age and from mutineers! . . . and the old soldier wept in his agony, as the old brigadier had nearly wept at his time of trial. "Take me down," he had cried, "and I'll fire your

blasted guns!" So he was untied from the improvised triangles and given more stimulant and led to the tank where two twelve-pounder guns had been got into position. Staggering to the limber, he got out a round and cartridge and arranged the friction-tube and lanyard. The gun loaded and laid, the first round fired at his friends by first-class gunner Sergeant Patrick Delahaney sped on its way against his countrymen, and the layer groaned aloud. But he had laid the round well off the gate, and the first shot took no effect. Ranzan Khan, the rebel leader, standing near to watch the effect of his new master-gunner, fiercely ordered the sergeant to be tied up to the gun wheel again without a word of explanation. "Flog him another fifty, till he can remember to shoot straight, but see that you do not kill him!" and then and there on his mangled back fifty more lashes were laid on. "Now take him back to the battery; and just you remember, Master Feringhee, that every bad shot you make will mean fifty more, and I shall take good care not to kill you."

And so it had come about that Delahaney had shot straight and true, not for his life, for which he cared little, but to save his mangled back from more lashes and from salt and spirit and chillies, and every agony that the tender ruth of the mutineer could devise to break a strong man's heart without killing him.

Once he had given up the struggle he had worked his guns steadily and accurately as one in a dream, and had been freely plied with stimulants. On the memorable morning that Neil's relieving column had sunk on the besiegers, Delahaney, dazed and half drunk, had fallen down by one of the guns after the native gunners had fled only to fall to the bayonet, and in this state had been found by a party of Neil's Lambs, and had been dragged and cuffed into the presence of the General, and thence to the fort mainguard.

All that afternoon summary courts were doing justice on the captured mutineers, such justice as only a really angry people can carry out on those who have hopelessly abused the trust put in them. Seven guns drawn up on the parade-ground

outside the fort served as the anteroom to the courts of justice held in the shade of the ruined main gate. By batches at the cannon's mouth the mutineers, after the customary law of the East, expiated their offence, in silence and in resignation. The next day a general court-martial would try renegade and ex-Sergeant Patrick Delahaney for desertion to the enemy.

But in the meantime M'Gillivray had spread the story of the rebel master-gunner far and wide, and the tide of fury and indignation that had set so strong against him had now turned to sorrow and deep perplexity. The officers ordered to try him were in sore doubt. The times were stirring, and death roamed the land unmolested, so that men's hearts did not stick at trifles. In this merciless mutiny there was no room for renegades, and besides, there was a terrible story from the north, none the better for having grown in every station and every canteen through which it had filtered. General Neil was a hard, strong man, furious at the supineness and incompetence he had met with in his avenging march, implacable against the men who had added merciless massacre to military mutiny, and little likely to allow extenuating circumstances to affect his treatment of the guilty. And there seemed little doubt but that Delahaney had openly and effectively taken part with the mutineers. So it was not surprising that officers who unconcernedly condemned the rebel prisoners to be blown from the guns were dismayed at the prospect of conducting a formal court-martial on the unfortunate artillery pensioner.

It was therefore of the nature of a reprieve when the trial was postponed a day to allow of an expedition against a body of armed peasants who had been raiding on the Trunk Road, the Company's turnpike to Calcutta, up which troops and munitions must come. During the day's respite Delahaney had come to his senses, and had realised the horror of his position once more. He had asked for the Brigadier, who had consented to see him, and his daughter had been brought in from an out-station to find her father in his terrible position. So sympathy and hesitation grew among those left in the fort,

the more so that it was believed that the General took the sternest view of the case, and had expressed indignation that the man had ever been taken prisoner.

Late that evening the troops of the flying column staggered into cantonments after twenty miles of marching and a tiring fight, bringing a gun, some prisoners, a rescued European subordinate, and bringing also a dozen of their number in doolies. The tired troops slept where they halted, and Delahaney lay in his cell awaiting the morrow's court, and the General paced up and down his verandah, even his strong nerve affected at the coming trial. And all the while the telegraph ticked news of further risings and mutinies, and cries for urgent help.

That night an hour after sundown cholera broke out among the relieving column, broke with that suddenness and force that so marked the history of that scourge now happily brought under in India by the march of science. The men that day had broken their ranks in search of water, and, as soldiers always will, had drunk deep of the foulest water, deaf to all remonstrances, and parched beyond all care or patience. Two men were seized at nine o'clock, and by midnight there were fifty cases, the worst dying in an hour or so, till all order and discipline ceased, and men were seized with a panic. And the march of death followed an eccentric course, for every third man in one company went down, and then it took another company by alternate sections, till the doctors could no longer treat the cases, and the men had forced the guard and got at the rum godown.<sup>1</sup> By three in the morning the Destroying Angel had passed over the bivouacs of the troops, left untouched the crowded married quarters full of the refugee women and children, and the doctors began to hope. It was perhaps four when the sentry over Delahaney's cell fell down with his arms rattling on the pavement, and as it took him, it took also his prisoner. By dawn Patrick Delahaney was dead and the last debt paid, and ready to be buried with twenty-seven British

<sup>1</sup> Store.

soldiers who died that night. And with Delahaney the hand was stayed. He was the last case, and despite the horror of the sudden outbreak a load was lifted from the whole force and garrison. And with Patrick Delahaney the scourge passed away and disappeared, till men said he had expiated his crime. That very morning, gathering up his fit men, General Neil and his avengers passed on up country, the forerunner of many more, to the soldier's death he was yet to find, and the Brigadier resumed command of his district, and a hundred miles of communications, that he was to keep open as soon as some troops came to him.

So stirring were the times that ere long the defence of the fort and the tragedy of Delahaney were forgotten, as happily in this world all tragedies are. But if you care to stroll down to the old cemetery by the Ganges, where lies half the history of India, you will find the monument to the men of the Lambs who died of that scourge of cholera, and the names of the poor dead thereon. Also by the side you will see a black slate bearing the inscription—

P. D.

1857

R. I. P.

—and underneath had been engraved the saying of the great King who had tasted all the bitterness that earth could give, and come to peace at the end—

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.”

For there was another in the station who knew the weakness of spirit that may come to the strong man grown old.

## XI

### THE FRONTIER WARS OF 1897

#### THE STORMING OF DARGAI

(20th of October, 1897)

THE coming of new wars dims the memory and the glory of those that are past, as the Peninsula drove the memories of Blenheim and Malplaquet and of Dettingen from men's minds, and salved the sores left by the American War and the follies of Flanders. South Africa dimmed the romance of the great war on the Indian Frontier of 1897, and the Great War thrust South Africa to the limbo of old forgotten things. But now and again it is good to take out the old stories and polish them up to be read, like the Apocrypha, for the benefit of learning and instruction.

Now the storming of Dargai is worth re-telling, not only for the excitement and daring of the episode, a small enough one as such things go, but for its high mountain setting and all the great drama and romance that hang round the frontier hills of India, since Alexander of Macedon swept through them out of Bactria or Nadir Shah the Turk of Persia relieved his Mogul cousin of the Peacock throne.

It is five and thirty years since Dargai was stormed and it is not necessary here to examine in any detail the story of the tribal borders; suffice it to say that the pushing forward of our outposts to improve our tactical and strategical position, and to be the better able to carry out our pledge to Afghanistan of assistance against Russia, had irritated and inflamed many of the clans. Added to this, the recent victory of Turkey over Greece had but

added fuel to the Islamic enthusiasm which is always latent, and the drum ecclesiastic was openly beaten along the border.

At that period the Army in India had completed for the first time a general scheme of mobilization based on modern lines in which every unit knew its place, and in which railway supplies and departmental services were interwoven. The threat of Russia to Afghanistan and India had produced the need for an up-to-date organization, and it was very soon to be put to the test.

Early in the summer of 1897 the first outbreak began, dramatic enough in its setting, but without giving any alarm as to what was in store. Up in Waziristan, since the Wana affair of three years before, a British force had occupied one of the trade routes from Ghuzni. A political officer with a small escort was touring the district, settling discussions and disputes, and had camped at Maizar. The troops, drawn from the Frontier Force, acknowledged experts, but, like all experts, apt to grow careless, were suddenly attacked by the friendly tribesmen, in a very un-military position. Heavy losses took place and the detachment extricated itself with great difficulty. This started a local blaze, and, although the hot weather had set in, troops of all kinds were hurried to the area. A month or so later, to every one's surprise, the fire broke out a hundred miles or so farther north. The garrison in the Swat valley and on the top of the Malakand, close to the old Græco-Bactrian road, were most unexpectedly and heavily attacked by a large and fanatical gathering of the clans which had come over the valleys from far and near.

The defence and the relief entailed some fierce fighting. The attacking tribesmen, blessed by their priests, believed that those who doubted not were immune to British bullets and that British walls would fall as the faithful reached them. Despite the throes of a Punjab summer, divisions were hastily mobilized and pushed up to the border. A considerable force now proceeded to visit the valleys north of Peshawur from which the attackers had come, and some severe fighting was witnessed. But hardly a month had elapsed when a burst of flame appeared near Peshawur itself, and the powerful Mohmand tribes poured

across the border to be met in scorching heat by a British and Indian force at Shubkaddar in an action chiefly memorable for a charge by a portion of the 13th Bengal Lancers. Again was the mobilization scheme put into effect and more troops started for the border. But before the battalions and brigadiers could reach their brigades, fresh troubles broke out, north and south and east and west. The Khaiber Pass itself and the hills beyond lay chiefly among the Afridi tribes. By a convention of many years' standing, the chiefs in return for allowances maintained a corps of rifles, guided, and more or less managed, by the Political Officer of the Khaiber. The Afridi tribes caught the prevailing infection, and rose against law and order to which they were sworn. Then arose a series of incidents of which the Army in India still thinks with a shudder. The British officer in the Khaiber, heart and soul with the Khaiber Rifles, was called in to see his chief at Peshawur. Leaving the men who were prepared to hold the Khaiber forts against their own clansmen, expecting to be with them in a day, he withdrew. To his chagrin and anger he was not allowed to return, and the Rifles, after a desperate fight alone, lost their forts and the whole Khaiber was in a blaze. The confusion in India was now immense. No mobilization scheme could stand it. Units and commanders coming up in ordered procession were switched and diverted at odd railway stations to stem the current of rising and inroad as the needs of the hour demanded. But half India was moving up to the frontier. On a clear night, those in the Samana forts, looking anxiously westward, could see smoking trains far away across the plains of the Punjab, waiting at the crossing stations with their loads of troops and transport. But the Samana forts were to fall under the wave of tribal fury before the trains could get their loads to the mountains. With the Khaiber a raging whirlpool, the Orakzais could not keep quiet, and they surged over the Samana posts, Regulars and Militia, burning Saragarhi and massacring its Sikh garrison, and then swarmed into Kurram and Miranzai. Kohat, the frontier station on the way to the Kurram, was not then on the



railway. Troops from the Indus railhead were marching up, but for some days the tribes had a free hand, to be seen in the shape of burnt police posts and smoking homesteads.

Thus sporadically, where least expected, the frontier "went" till the conflagration had spread along the whole border. But the Army was now assembling. The tribes round the Malakand and the Mohmands had been subdued and punished, and, after much debate, the Government of India, stirred by public opinion after the disgraceful episodes of the Khaiber forts—a contumely, however, not quite so deserved as appearances suggested—decided that they would once and for all, in the picturesque frontier metaphor, "lift the Purdah," and penetrate into the fabulous Afridi Tirah and show those boastful and turbulent tribesmen that if the patience of Government "was as protracted as a winter's night, its arm was as long as a summer's day." It was decided to enter that great upland via the Miranzai, and cut across the valleys by entering them high up, over the Chagru Kotal which led out of Miranzai. By following the Miranzai valley from Kohat the lie of the land made this possible, so that instead of fighting our way up long valleys between high hills, a force could concentrate by a fine road in accessible country, and, if well-equipped for mountain fighting, could cut across the valleys near their tops and descend on to the legendary plateaux in the heart of Afridi Tirah . . . legendary because, while the Afridis often '*bukhed*'<sup>1</sup> of their glories, no Europeans had seen them.

It was my good fortune to take some part in the operations for the relief of the Samana posts, in those hot days when the conflagration was still breaking out. I had been for some years training Imperial Service Artillery, and had been sent up with Cookson<sup>2</sup> and the Jeypur Transport Train.

While the flames roared and the troops climbed on the Samana heights we had brought up convoy after convoy of

<sup>1</sup> Bukhed = boasted.

<sup>2</sup> Later Major-General Cookson, long affectionately known in India as "Cookie."

stores in our light carts from our railhead on the Indus, in intense heat. When the Government had decided to lift the Afridi Purdah, every mountain gun was wanted, and I was ordered back to Jammu to mobilize and bring up to Kohat one of the batteries I had been training (No. 1 Kashmir Mountain Battery), and in a couple of weeks returned to find a very large force assembling under the high bastions of the old Sikh fortress in Kohat; and a very memorable sight it was. Two divisions were assembling and marching up to Shinawri, forty-five miles from Kohat, a plain lying below the Samana, under the great pass of the Chagru Kotal above which the high cliffs of the Dargai ridge frowned down on the roadway.

As I marched with my guns into Kohat, long lines of troops and transport could be seen winding down from the pass which led from Peshawur, whence the troops who had been dealing with the Mohmands were now coming to join the rest of the Tirah force. As these filed over the passes, other brigades were passing from Kohat up to the place of assembly. Sir William Lockhart was to command the force. General Yeatman Biggs, R.A., long known to his corps as "Y. B.," had the 2nd Division, of which a considerable portion was already on the Samana. Penn-Symonds, then of outstanding fame, had the 1st Division, which was assembling at Kohat. But while the divisions hastened to the gathering, another famous Indian soldier, Sir Power Palmer, or "Long P.," as we called him, was commanding the troops as they assembled and would control the communications. As we marched amid the echelons out of Kohat, he and his staff jostled past us a-horseback, for the days of generals and staffs in motor cars had not yet come to jockey the marching troops. The weather had changed, the nights had grown cold and the heat of the days had passed, for it was now mid-December, and the concentration at Shinawri was nearly complete. The 2nd Division was either there or on the Samana hill-top close by, and the 1st Division was already half assembled.

Above the plain at Shinawri rose the great hills. Looking up at the Kotal 4,000 feet above us, we could see the mountain

path, for it was little more, winding up a long spur. On the right of the pass, the Samana range itself came to an end in the mountain known as the Samana Sukh, which overhung the pass and the gorges on the far side. On the opposite side of the pass, and perhaps 500 feet higher, the great cliffs of the Dargai ridge also overhung in sheer precipice the defiles down which the road wound to Karrappa in the Khanki valley, the home of the Orakzai tribes, who were now "for it" for their share in the attack on the Samana forts and their raids into Miranzai.

From the top of the pass, the ridge of the Chagru Kotal was connected by a long steep spur with the Dargai ridge, running into it by a narrow neck with precipitous sides, which joined the foot of the cliffs some 400 feet from the summit, and from whence a goat track led slanting up the face of the cliffs. To the left of this neck the slopes fell away for many hundreds of feet in steep boulder and scrub-clad shale which led nowhere. To the right of the junction neck, the gorge dropped precipitous and dark, choked with scrub and fallen rocks, to the valley on the road at Karrappa. Now it was fairly obvious and in accordance with all rules that it would be impossible to commit the long lines of troops and vast convoys to this deep gorge, or even to the top of the pass, without holding the Dargai ridge, which was less than a mile from the bare top of the pass.

Before we turn to the tactical action of the forcing and crossing of the pass, we had better look at the organization of the transport, for it is with this knowledge that we can learn some lessons which still hold good, and will hold good even when mechanical and electric mules scale mountain passes. The Army in India as a whole had very little organized transport, though the Frontier Force had excellent regimental animals. A very few mules and mule carts were maintained at the larger up-country stations. The work of the Army in its garrison was done by the carts and camels of the countryside, by contractors. All of which was very right and proper. No country wants to feed standing transport in time of peace. But, on the other hand, unless it has some system of organizing the resources of civil

life it cannot tackle sudden war. For generations this question of transport appears a lurid streak in Indian campaigns and has torn the guts out of the Indian Exchequer. In the days of Lake and Wellesley, the country was entirely served by bullock and camel, and long years of war had produced an efficient system of using them, which was soon forgotten in peace. It will be remembered how the Commander-in-Chief in India and the European troops from the Simla hills trying to retake Delhi after the outbreak in 1857 were delayed for weeks, while collecting "carriage." The story of the Afghan War of 1878-1880 is largely the story of "carriage." The old art had been forgotten, and things were no better in 1897. The orders had gone forth to hire and to impress. But hiring is not always easy in times of danger, and to impress means animals without attendants. Tens of thousands of animals hastily impressed, dishonestly purchased, often without attendants and gear, were pushed up to the bases of the Army. Rubbishy gear was hastily bought and manufactured, worthless attendants were crimped and clothed. Willing but inexperienced officers and non-commissioned officers from units not mobilized were brought up to endeavour to evolve order out of chaos. And a good transport officer, here as in South Africa, was worth his weight in gold. Soldiers who can fight are always available. Men who can and will organize behind the line are harder to come by. When I went up to the Miranzai, with the Jeypur Transport, my father, an old-time officer, wrote, "I don't much like this Carter Patterson business." That was the old spirit that spoilt all efficiency of organization. The Knight and the Esquire would only handle sword and lance!

Sir William Lockhart's plans were perfectly straightforward. The force was to advance, the 2nd Division leading, into the Khanki valley. Then one more march, over the Sampagha pass to the head of the Mastura valley, then over once again into the headquarters of the Afridis at Bagh and Maidan, the "garden" and the "plain," the upland glory and boast of Afrididom. With the force was to go a long convoy of pack ponies with ten

days' supplies for the two divisions. But the road was not yet fit even for camels. Pack ponies, the miserable little rats of the Markomans and other pack-carrying fraternities, thousands of little donkeys, all equipped with *chatts* often too big for them, all of which would have to wind over these difficult paths in single file behind two divisions, each with thirteen battalions and three mountain batteries all marching in single file, miles and miles and miles of them! The head of the force must reach its destination long before the rear left camp, over pack paths that no one had ever seen. Equipped with this information it is interesting, too, to see the mess that followed.

On the 18th of October that evil thing which crops up mis-handled in every military age was carried out—a reconnaissance-in-force of the Kotal and the Dargai heights. A portion of the troops at Shinawri under the command of Sir Power Palmer performed this operation. The Dargai ridge was actually carried in the morning of that day by the Gordon Highlanders, supported by a couple of mountain batteries, for thirteen casualties. The Orakzai tribesmen who held it were dislodged. But for want of hard thinking and a little *bandobast* the troops returned to camp nearly 5,000 feet below them at Shinawri, and lost fifty men in doing so. An Afridi *lashkar* camped in the Khanki valley had swarmed up the heights and hung on to the British rearguard. By the evening the high cliffs against the distant sky were stiff with their standards, and all the next day the sight remained to stir the gathering Army.

On the 20th of October an early start was made by the 2nd Division, but a strange thing was ordered. The loading of pack convoys is a difficult and lengthy business, requiring much labour, which can only be done just as the animals start, unless they are to stand for hours under load, but this transport, including the ten days' rations, was to be loaded before dawn, for all troops. A wiser administration would have detailed a company<sup>1</sup> to remain behind with each corps to load when the time to join in the order of march approached.

<sup>1</sup> These were the days of eight companies to a battalion.

Up went the head of the column before daylight, winding single file along the interminable road, Brigadier-General Kempster with the 3rd Brigade leading, followed by three mountain batteries. Even this force covered perhaps five miles of road. More troops cut in from the Samana, and a mountain battery and the divisional headquarters moved to the Samana Sukh. Kempster was to sweep along the spur leading from the Kotal to the Dargai heights and to swarm up them as had been done on the 18th. Three mountain batteries on the Kotal and one upon the Sukh were to support him. It was to be a bagatelle, and while Kempster held the ridge and the heights on the left side of the desert, the rest of the force, with its transport, would defile peacefully behind the leading brigade into the valley below. Soon after daybreak the 1/2 Gurkhas under Lieut.-Colonel Travers, followed by the Dorsets and supported by the Derbys (drawn from another brigade), started along the spur to the foot of the cliffs. The remaining two battalions of Kempster's Brigade, the Gordon Highlanders and the 15th Sikhs, waited on the top of the Kotal. With them also were the 3rd Sikhs. The leading battalions passed the still smoking remains of Mahmud Khan, a fortified hamlet that had been destroyed the day of the reconnaissance, and formed up under cover in a small depression behind a ridge whence the short neck already described connected the spur with the foot of the Dargai cliffs. Soon after 8 a.m. the mountain batteries on the Kotal and on the Sukh opened fire on the crest. Colonel Travers led his first few scouts across easily enough to some cover under overhanging rocks. Then the defenders awoke to what was in progress. The remainder of the Gurkhas attempting to join their Colonel in extended order along the narrow neck, encountered a tremendous fire, chiefly of Martini bullets aimed by the best marksmen on the frontier. Every expert in the clefts above had two or three loaders. Hardly a shot missed its billet. The men, dribbling over, were hit time and again, and rolled down the slopes on either side or lay on the fairway. Colonel Travers had hoped, as soon as a fair clump of men

joined him, to begin pushing up the goat tracks where there appeared to be occasional cover from rocks. But his party did not increase. The accurately aimed fire swept off all who ventured to join him. Then, after some time had elapsed, General Kempster ordered the Dorsets to try, and a similar fate awaited them. It seemed impossible to get over that fire-swept neck. Then some of the Derbyshire Regiment were ordered to make an attempt—a futile proceeding. There were already crowds of men and stretchers behind the little ridge and in the depression. More men only added to the confusion. All the morning long, this *impasse* grew. The Brigadier was impatient but could not get the rush over the neck. He reported to General Yeatman-Biggs, and asked if it was essential to carry the heights. General Biggs knew that the troops could not be committed to the gorges on the other side until the enemy, whose numbers seemed to be increasing, was driven from the cliffs. Another effort must be made.

Then General Kempster sent for the Gordons and his Sikhs. By mistake the order got to a battalion not under his command, the 3rd Sikhs. The Gordons were moving off and the 3rd Sikhs followed them. Colonel Mathias, commanding the Gordons, received his orders that the heights must be carried at all costs.

The afternoon was now advancing, and Mathias apparently realized that Gordon Highlanders were no more immune than anyone else, and that to dribble them over could only mean that the kilts would lie on the slope among Colonel Travers' Gurkhas and the Dorsets. Besides, it was obvious that a long climb up the face of the cliffs was to follow, and that only swarms of men following individual leaders would be likely to make the ascent. In fact it seemed to all onlookers that even when the neck was passed in sufficient numbers a still more difficult task remained.

However, the first thing was to get enough men over the neck to be able to swarm up the cliffs. All the while there was a mass of tired, thirsty, and dispirited soldiers jammed up with ammunition mules and wounded in the small covered space behind the ridge. With difficulty Mathias got his men formed up in an

irregular mass behind cover. He had realized that a mass alone would get over, that in the space of time they were on the ridge only a certain number of men could be hit.

Then occurred the inspiring operation of which so much was written at the time. Colonel Mathias ordered officers and pipers to the front. The Colonel strode out in front and the pipes set up "Cock of the North." And out on to that narrow ridge scrambled a mass of some six hundred cheering Highlanders. The artillery redoubled their supporting fire, and though many men fell, the mass, as the Colonel expected, got over, and in their train came Gurkhas, Sikhs, and the men of Dorset and Derby. Piper Findlater, lying wounded in the neck, played his pipes as the men rushed on, a gallant incident that especially delighted the public.

The neck crossed, the companies set themselves in some confusion to scramble upwards along the slopes and goat-paths and among rocks and crevices. It was a matter of at least three hundred difficult feet, and every one thought it would be the worst; but no! the heavy rifle fire soon died away, and the leading files gained the top at various parts almost unmolested. The tribesmen had seized their standards and had gone.

What had happened? Two things must have contributed to the result. First, of course, the impressive sight of the masses of Highlanders and other units swarming over the neck below, and secondly the artillery fire. The effect of the artillery was in this wise. The marksmen sweeping the neck were ensconced invulnerably among rocks and clefts whence no shrapnel bullet could reach them. In absolute security they picked off the individual figures below them. But when it came to repelling the men swarming up the goat-tracks, it was another matter. The marksmen had to come out of their crevices, and the remainder of the line had to emerge also from behind the rocks and lean far over to fire on the climbers. But then the artillery came into play. From the spluttered marks of the shrapnel bullets it was evident that to do this now meant considerable exposure, while though the batteries below on the Kotal could



spatter the top of the rocks, the guns far up on the Sukh could bring a high angle of searching fire. This, together with the breaking of the original spell, destroyed the determination of the tribes.

That is the end of the story, but for learning and instruction let us see the aftermath of the loading order, and of failing to maintain an organization for the expansion of army transport. The ridge was not carried till late in the afternoon. It was quite impossible to think of continuing the march that night. The troops bivouaced as best they could. The convoys stood patiently all that night under load on the hillside for the six or seven miles of road back to Shinari. On the *mazri*-clad plain below thousands of animals which had not even started the ascent stood in dark masses the night through. None was watered that night, only near a transport officer were any of the beasts fed. It was quite impossible to take off any loads. Many a weakly animal collapsed under its load in the twenty-six hours they had waited. Then they began to file slowly down the Kotal into the Khanki valley. Thousands collapsed on the difficult descent. Of those that got into camp at the far end, all had been unfed, unwatered, and under load for the best part of forty hours. Thousands died or were destroyed and the whole operation was delayed while fresh convoys of food were organized and fresh beasts brought up from India, all from the folly of what, in those days, passed for staff officers. But it is a thing that might easily happen again, and it is worthy of remembrance as a warning. Plans may go wrong, but even had the heights been carried without delay, those animals would have remained under load for over twenty-four hours without water. Had the course been taken of leaving a hundred men per battalion to load up transport when required, none of this would have happened.

It is not necessary to continue the story. The campaign was carried out with great endurance on the part of the troops, considerable audacity on the part of the tribes, and an exasperating want of good will in the higher machinery which was responsible for many of the regrettable incidents and disasters

which took place. We learned a good deal about frontier warfare in the face of the breech-loaders which was very different to facing the old sword and matchlock men. Some brigadiers discovered that it was their business to see that rearguards got home and were supported, and General Kempster's Brigade came in for several hard knocks after the storming of Dargai. To be "Kempstered" became a ribald phrase which the army used, and "I'm Kempstered if I do" a camp expression of dissent, which was perhaps hard on a fighting brigadier—but such is the way of armies.

## XII

### FROM SEPOY TO SUBAHDAR

IN 1873 there appeared, from the hands of a local printer at Lahore, a book of the above name, being the translation of an autobiography in the vernacular of one Seetaram, a pensioned *subahdar* in the service of the Honourable East India Company. To be a *subahdar*, let alone a pensioned *subahdar*, in that service, was to have attained close on three-score years and ten, as you may tell from the tally of ages on the memorial over the long trench graves at Chillianwallah; and the period of Seetaram's active service was close on half a century. He rested from his labours soon after the Great Mutiny, in loyalty and honour, and he joined the army before the Nepal and Mahratta-*cum*-Pindari wars. That is to say, his services covered the period of all the great Indian campaigns of the English except those of General Lake and Sir Arthur Wellesley.

His autobiography would therefore be a storehouse of sidelights from, to some extent, beneath the harrow, as Colonel Norgate of the Bengal Staff Corps, who was the original translator, recognised, and wrote a preface to the edition of 1873—though it would appear that an earlier translation of some kind was made, as it is referred to in a *Times* of 1863. Colonel Norgate himself received it from the author in 1861. A reprint was made in 1880, also by a local firm in Lahore. It attracted Lord Kitchener's attention as full of useful lessons which still held good for those who would see below the surface, and who have to deal with the Indian soldier of to-day. It was accordingly republished in Calcutta, edited by Lieut.-Colonel Phillot, of the Board of Examiners, and also translated

into Urdu under his supervision. Lord Kitchener made it one of the official textbooks for the examination in Urdu by the Higher Standard. Its wisdom was invaluable, the while its very allusions stimulated interest in the history of the British in India in the eventful first half of the nineteenth century, unfortunately some less wise authority has removed it from the canon.

The fascination which first moved Colonel Norgate to translate the book does not fade as time rolls on; and its simple reflections and ingenuous deductions, as well as the sidelights that it throws on events of which we now only read in official histories, have a peculiar charm. In sending his work to the first translator Colonel Norgate, Seetaram says that he has received seven wounds and six war medals; and if half of what he tells be true, he certainly deserved these latter.

Seetaram, a Brahmin of Oude of a fighting clan, was born near the one-time Rajput centre of Ajudya, the son of Gangaram Pande. Men of the Pande clan served largely in the old army of the Bengal Line; and it will be remembered how Mangal Pande, the first mutineer, was responsible for the bestowal of the generic name of "Pandy" on the mutineers. When seventeen years of age, after a careful and orthodox upbringing in the house of the family priest, the young Brahmin's love of adventure was stirred by the return from the wars of his maternal uncle, a *jemadar* in a line battalion of the Company. The lad at once caught the scarlet fever badly, and longed, to the horror of his mother and the family priest, to shoulder a pike also. The father having a pending lawsuit, and mindful of the interest at the court of Oude which service with the British conferred, rather encouraged the boy's martial ardour, and a few months saw him returning with his uncle to his cantonment at Agra. Seetaram had never seen a *sahib*, and had the wildest ideas concerning them. His first introduction to one was seeing the adjutant measuring recruits in the verandah of his bungalow, and his surprise at hearing the adjutant address his uncle in the vernacular was great. His next adventure is

the interview with the small, red-faced old man with the eye of a hawk, who he finds is the colonel of a thousand men. In every case he is struck with the consideration with which his uncle the *jemadar* is received. In a parenthesis he here bewails the fact that the new *sahibs* are not like the old *sahibs*, and can't talk the language as well as they could. It is always the same story in the East, the same now as a hundred years ago, when Seetaram took the shilling—the new *sahibs* are not like the old *sahibs*. You hear the same in the clubs,—the new soldier is not like the old soldier—the new rank and file are not like the old rank and file,—and yet every one knows that for activity and physique the old regiments were not in it with the new ones. We need not follow the young Brahmin through his recruit stages, save to note the delight with which he left the recruit squad to don his red coat,—boys are much like one another whether skin be white or brown; but it is interesting to note that then as now, and then as ever, some *sahib* stood out in the regiment as a wonder and a power and a demigod. In Seetaram's regiment this wonderful Englishman was "Buram-peel" *Sahib* (he cannot be traced, but it may have been Bloomfield), and he at once became an object of intense veneration to the lad, and remained so all his life. These wonderful Buram-peel *Sahibs* are the men who enable the English to lead alien races to victory, from the banks of the Nile to the Great Wall of China, from burning desert to perpetual snow, come rain come shine—and the secret is the gift of the gods. It is to be noticed that when a corps wants to mutiny, it is the first business of the instigators to get rid of the Buram-peels, lest their influence counteracts the poison.

That, however, is a story that comes much later, and we may notice that the rest of Seetaram's *sahibs* appeared to him very ordinary *sahibs*, who had nicknames in the ranks, such as the *Oont Sahib* (camel), the *Nawab Sahib*, the *Damn Sahib*, etc., but no one ever dared give Buram-peel *Sahib* a nickname.

Here Seetaram has a reflection to make. Since the Mutiny the *Lalkurtee* (red coat—viz., Queen's Army) officers do not

treat the Indian soldiers in the way they used, which he admits is small wonder. Even when he was one of the force that relieved Lucknow, he was a "d——d black pig," and recalls how when he made chappaties in Cabul for officers of the 13th and 41st Foot, it was "Jack Sepoy was a d——d good fellow." Seetaram says he was always on good terms with the European soldiers, who used to treat them well, and why wouldn't they, for "did we not do all their hard work? We took their guards in the heat, we stood sentry over their rum casks. But the new soldiers from Europe are not so fine as the old ones." And he had heard that the Russ cannon killed all the big ones. "In the old days the 17th Foot called us brothers, the 16th Lancers never walked near our *chulas* (cooking-places)." The old man's recollections of the Nepal or Ghurka war are merely those of the young private in the ranks—his chief memories being of the repulse at the hill-fort of Nala-pani, where forty-eight men of his own corps were killed and two whole companies of white soldiers, whose comrades, he remarks, were nothing daunted, and came on again "like young cocks." Burampeel *Sahib*, to the great grief of the regiment, had an arrow through the chest and had to be invalided to England. After the final successful campaign of a rather disastrous war, we find the following reflection: "The English respect brave men and do not kill them. Is not this curious, for is not a brave man the most dangerous enemy? . . . The wounded snake can kill as long as life remains. If your enemy is not worth killing he is not worth fighting with." And thus the philosophy of the East, and as a recent Indian historian of the Mutiny has put it, when talking of the massacres of the women and children, "Would I kill a serpent and leave the eggs?" Which, after all, is simple human nature, without the shadow of the Prince of Peace.

Of all the curses under which the peasantry and traders of Hindustan groaned, and from which the British saved them, though now they would forget it, that of the Pindaris was perhaps the worst. The break-up of the Mogul armies had

given rise to a race of free-lances, buccaneers, and masterless men, who had formed themselves into bands under various leaders, and lived at their ease on the countryside. They raided with merciless and fiendish cruelty for hundreds of miles round the fortified places of refuge that they had made for themselves on the banks of the Nerbudda and in the more inaccessible parts of Central India. At last, in 1816, the Company and its allies could stand it no longer, and the Marquess of Hastings collected a large army at various points surrounding the Pindari districts, with a view to exterminating the nest once and for all.

It is not necessary to deal here with the intrigues and cabals that brought several of the Mahratta Chiefs into the field against us instead of assisting us to the good government and welfare of their own and neighbouring lands. Suffice it to say that the Pindari war developed into a Mahratta war, and to the war marched Seetaram, a young though fully trained sepoy of the Honourable Company's Bengal Line. Wounded and left in the jungle in one of the lesser skirmishes, he was rescued by villagers. Returning by a good chance to his regiment, after thirteen days' absence, with a bullet in his back, he succeeded, he relates, in winning for the first time the approbation of his adjutant by not losing his musket and ammunition,—an interesting light on the fact that the way to an adjutant's heart has always been the same. Seetaram tells us also the old story, that the Pindaris always had better information than the British. However secret the British movements, they always seemed known to the enemy,—an ancient problem. Our army generally met the enemy when the spies reported none near for twenty *coss*. Oh, memory of the good De Wet and Rechter Hertzogg! The countryside sympathised with the Pindari for all their loot and cruelty, because, says Seetaram, give them a horse, and all would have looted on their own account.

Seetaram talks of the cholera as a new disease, unknown to the English and to the natives. When the war was over Seetaram returned on furlough, to frighten his mother, who thought

him a ghost. A telling of travellers' and soldiers' tales to his gaping fellow-villagers was a famous amusement to Seetaram, the furlough man, till he mentioned his rescue by villagers and the girl who had given him water. But he had reckoned without the village Brahmin, who at once reviled him as unclean, and excommunicated him, till fines and a Brahmin's feast at his expense had wiped out the stain. Seetaram remarks, "Five years' savings were thus expended, but who can combat destiny!" Sick furlough over, Seetaram rejoins, to find his beloved Burampeel Sahib back from Europe. He remarks, "I have never seen more than two *sahibs* like Burampeel *Sahib*, and they were *asal Belaitee* (real English), not *sahibs* from the hilly island." The allusion here is not a clear one: possibly the Scotch or Irish who so largely held the Company's commissions did not meet with the old man's approval.

The war was still in progress, and Seetaram relates the rescue from an Arab, in the act of killing, a young girl, daughter of a Thakoor in Bundelcund, whom the Arab had carried off. Burampeel *Sahib*, when appealed to, had the girl taken care of on behalf of the sepoy, but the adjutant of the regiment proposed to buy her from Seetaram for four hundred rupees. Seetaram was much enamoured of her beauty, and Burampeel *Sahib* explained the case to the colonel, when she was allowed to accompany the regiment as the lad's wife. It is such a story as that of the famed Juanita, the Spanish girl, rescued in the sack of a town by young Harry Smith, whose wife and constant companion she became. In storming a fort the whole of Seetaram's company were blown up, his uncle killed, and he himself badly injured. The hospitals were so full that the *sahibs* gave up their tents for the wounded. Seetaram marvels at the mad mercy of the Sirkar in not hanging the governor of the fort. The British view, that the man had been faithful to his own master, did not appeal to him, though now and again he recognises that there is magnanimity in such acts, even if foolish in their conception. Indeed, he is always at pains to bring out the acts of the British that he recognises



as just and worthy, even when he cannot himself admire the ethics that inspired them.

After the Pindari war Seetaram is offered promotion in a new battalion that was being raised in Futtehghur—one of those many new battalions that the constant extension of the British dominion rendered necessary, and which, unbalanced by any corresponding increase in the European garrison, finally resulted in that top-heavy Bengal army which blew up in the cataclysm of '57. Major "Gardeen," the new C.O., is described as an eccentric character, who came on parade in shooting dress, and threw his heavy stick at the heads of stupid recruits. Seetaram grieves at parting from Burampeel *Sahib*, saying again that "Only one Burampeel *Sahib* ever came from *Belait*."

With the new battalion, then come to some six years of age, Seetaram had marched with Combermere *Sahib* to the ever-memorable capture of Bhurtpur, which had so successfully defied the repeated assaults of Lord Lake and his large army. His company was amongst the stormers of the big bastion after the mine had been exploded, and the final exaltation that accrued to the Company at the capture of the impregnable place was viewed and duly noted on by this corporal of sepoy. Seetaram now became pay havildar, but lost that post through the prevailing custom of lending money to the British officers. He had lent Rs. 500 of the men's money to his captain, who could not repay when the pay havildar was called on unexpectedly to produce it.

He gives an instance of the curbing of the powers of commanding officers and the interference by higher authority, which was so happily done away with at the time of the post-Mutiny reconstruction. A havildar was tried for gross insolence to a superior officer and dismissed the service. He journeyed to Simla, threw himself at the feet of the *Lăt Sahib's* lady and was reinstated, or at least that is how the transaction was viewed by the simple Seetaram. The loss of power of the regimental officers, due to many pernicious and unnecessary causes, has often been noted as one of the minor concomitant

causes of the Mutiny; it is interesting to see that Seetaram held the same views. Seetaram complains of the want of show and dress of the *sahibs* as failing to impress the oriental mind. Only *memsahibs*, he says, appear at nautches as princesses should look. He had asked his officers why they too did not appear as princes and rulers: one had told him that it was considered a shame to wear jewels that had not been conferred as an honour; another *sahib* had told him that his *memsahib* wanted to wear so many jewels that he himself could not afford to do so! Seetaram appeals for continuity in officers. "Among us is a great dislike of new ways; . . . it takes us a long time to learn the ways of a *sahib*, and when the men are accustomed to him, it is not good to have him removed." The cry is as true to-day as when Seetaram handled the Company's musket. At this stage of his memoirs the old *subahdar* tells us what he thinks of the new post-Mutiny army and their discontents,—all wise talk, and by no means all out of date. The following is not without its modern application: "The practice of the Sirkar of keeping several regiments of native troops together at the same station is not wise. It is then that the young men get *musth*' (above themselves) and swagger about in the bazaars, puffed up with vain conceits, and talk of things they had better not. They forget the giver of their salt."

The next great event of history in which Seetaram took part was the expedition to Cabul, to put the exiled King Shah Soojah of the Suddozai tribe of the Durani nation once again on the throne of his fathers, so that a British puppet should keep the shadow of the bear off the sunlit empire of Hindustan. Seetaram was offered promotion into a new regiment of the Shah's Contingent, as the force was called that was being raised on his behalf. So to Cabul, *viâ* Candahar and the Bolan Pass, marched Seetaram with the Contingent, for his third great war. His account of the march to Cabul contains nothing new, nor is it necessary to follow the vicissitudes of the first phase of the campaign which, after the storming of Ghuzni, terminated with the restoration of the Shah and the

establishment of a British cantonment in Cabul. Here Seetaram makes mention of one of the well-known causes of the Afghan hatred of our occupation—viz., the partiality of Afghan ladies of rank for the British officers; and he refers to it at some length.

Present with his regiment at all the vicissitudes which overtook the unfortunate garrison, he marched with them to their undoing in the Khurd Cabul Pass, and being wounded with a musket-ball, was taken prisoner, carried back to Cabul, and in common with many of the high-caste sepoy of Hindustan, sold as a slave in the market-place, only fortunate that frost-bite had not removed a limb. Rs. 240 was the price the powerful young Brahmin fetched in the market-place, where he relates, several Europeans were also placed on sale, but whom some skins of Shiraz wine had apparently reconciled to their situation. One *sahib* he saw among the prisoners who cheered him by telling of the great army the Sirkar would undoubtedly send. Oosman Beg, his new master, treated him well, and had him taught Persian, threatening only terrible penalties in the event of an attempt to escape. The advance of the Avenging Army, left Seetaram, as it did many of his comrades, still a slave, and he had the mortification of hearing that the English, after burning the bazaar at Cabul, had left Afghanistan for good and all. To his own unaided efforts he must owe his release, and at last a camel-droving Powindah promised to see him through to British territory in return for a signed promise for a payment of Rs. 500.

In October, 1843, Seetaram arrived at Ferozepore, by way of the Gomal Pass and Dera Ismael Khan, to find himself forgotten of the world and at great difficulty of finding even food. The Brigade-major at Ferozepore refused to believe his story, or to help in the matter of the ransom. Before the magistrate he claimed release, since his camel-driver swore he was his slave, but got no help. Then to the Commissioner went the exile, and found the *Subahdar* on guard to be an old comrade, who at first received his story with some incredulity.

By the help of the *Subahdar* and the Commissioner the money was paid, and Seetaram found himself free, but penniless and dressed in his Afghan rags. Hurrying to the lines of a native regiment, to his horror, instead of sympathy, he was spurned as unclean and defiled, and even accused of having accepted Islam. The Brigade-major by now was convinced of the truth of Seetaram's story, and took him to the Brigadier. This officer was more than kind, took him in, gave him money, and arranged for him to be reinstated in his old regiment. This he now joined, was well received by his old colonel, and posted to it as a havildar. In the regiment, however, he was an outcast among his fellow Poorbeahs, and could only associate with the Christian drummers and the Muhammadans. During a visit to his home he was readmitted into caste, and his father helped to pay his ransom debt. His son had enlisted into the Bengal army and was away in Sinde. His first wife was dead, and the beautiful Thakoorin whom he had rescued from the Arab and married as a second wife had gone away, it was said, to try to find her old home. Going in search of her to Bundelcund, he found her living with her brother, and she rejoined him. Through his colonel's help, Government finally paid him the amount of ransom, but refused any back pay, unless he could find some one to certify to his record while with the Shah's Contingent. So all Seetaram's wars and years of service had but brought him to the position of a havildar.

He now tells us of the gossip and talk in his regiment at the falling prestige of the British, so diminished by the Kabul disasters, and how his colonel, to whom he repeated what he had heard, refused to hear more, but said he had a jealousy of the regiment. Seetaram mentions the advent of emissaries of the King of Delhi into the lines (the regiment was at Delhi). The sepoy regiments between Delhi and Ferozepore were, according to Seetaram, full of mutiny and discontent. The Sikh invasion of the Sutlej, however, diverted the public attention and the sepoys' minds. Seetaram with his regiment now took part in the terrible battle of Ferozeshah, and describes



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it as quite different from anything previously experienced, and talks of the famous charge of the 3rd Light Dragoons (still more famous at the previous battle of Moodkee) having changed the fate of the day. He mentions an item of that terrible night bivouac on the field of Ferozeshah, under the muzzles of the guns of the as yet unconquered Sikh batteries. An officer, not tipsy, but under the need of mental stimulant or sedative, walked up and down all night singing, and would not desist.

At Sobraon Seetaram witnessed the destruction of the Sikhs at the broken bridge, and was himself knocked senseless by a sepoy's musket driven against him as its owner was struck down by a round-shot. He relates how close to the bridge-head he saw a European soldier about to bayonet a wounded Sikh, who begged for mercy and called out in English, whereon the European kicked him several times and then bayoneted him. A deserter in the enemy's ranks was no rare thing in India, there being the just related instance of the artillery sergeant who deserted to the enemy at the second siege of Bhurtpur, and directed the cannon that fired on the Commander-in-Chief's tent. Now and again half-misty stories come through of similar occurrences in the Mutiny, and Sir Henry Norman even mentions a European woman being hanged at Meerut for her share in the outbreak there. After the occupation of Lahore Seetaram tells us that the Sirkar's *ikhbal* (prestige and fortune) stood very high, and all the talk and discontent that he speaks of earlier had passed away for the time. The luck of the Company *Bahadur* was in every one's mouth, for nothing succeeds like success. After this campaign Seetaram, with thirty-five years' service, attained the rank of *jemadar*, and though with four medals to show for it, had little of the wealth that he had looked for when as a young man he had left his village in Oude to shoulder the Company's musket.

But the faithful Seetaram had not yet done with wars, in spite of his thirty-five years' service. The outbreak of the Second Sikh War took his regiment into the thick of the soldiers'

battle at Chillianwallah. In his account is one of those small points which constantly occur in the narrative, and do so much to establish the credibility of the statements which rest on it as their only authority. A new colonel had joined the regiment that day, and during the struggle through the thick scrub, stopped the regiment from firing on a red-coated corps in their front, saying they were our own men. The officers, says Seetaram, kept telling him it was a Sikh corps, because they could see the black cross-belts, while those of the sepoy corps were white. Now the well-known coloured prints of the war always show the Sikhs in scarlet coatees and shell jackets with black belts. Seetaram says that the colonel was still afraid, and galloped up to the doubtful corps, which fired a volley in his face, whereon, unscathed, he galloped back, shouting, "All right! Fire away sepoy *log*." Seetaram tells us that the sepoys were not half so afraid of the Sikhs as in the campaign against them two years ago, and went at them much more readily.

No doubt the Sikhs too had lost their best corps in the Sutlej after Sobraon. During the long wait after the battle, when the two forces watched each other, the sepoys and the Sikhs used to meet and talk while bathing in the Jhelum, which ran close to both camps. The men of the European cavalry regiments would occasionally sally out and have unauthorised single combats with Sikh horsemen. Seetaram says he used to be much struck with the different behaviour of the British and Indian wounded. The former would lie still and shake their fists, cursing the enemy; while the latter would dance around, hugging the wounded limb, calling out, "*Dohai, Dohai, Company Bahadur!*" (Have pity, Great Company). At the "crowning mercy" of Goojerat, Seetaram's regiment was on baggage guard. So *Jemadar* Seetaram after his thirty-five years of service, escaped with his life from his fifth great campaign. Young he was in years, however, compared with many of the senior native officers of the Company's Bengal Army, where seniority alone counted for promotion. On the



pillar over the long trench graves at Chillianwallah already referred to, it is recorded that a *subahdar* of seventy and a *jemadar* of sixty-five were among the killed.

One great trial was still to be demanded of him, that of the Great Fear, when that famous army dissolved in a whirl of madness and mutiny; but before even this there was to be one more campaign, this time a minor one. In 1856 the Sonthal rebellion broke out—a rising of aboriginal hill and jungle tribes against the evils of direct administration and oppressive subordinates; and to the Sonthal hills and jungle marched Seetaram. The old man found the war a little incomprehensible: at one part of the country we were firing on them, at another feeding them with cart-loads of corn.

Seetaram now comes to the period immediately preceding the Mutiny, and the talk after the annexation of Oude. In April, 1857, he says, he again told the colonel what he knew of what was going on,—the talk of the greased cartridge, the excitement among the men, the come and go of the emissaries of the King of Oude and the old Mogul Emperor at Delhi, and the discontent among the troops serving in the Punjab and Sind for the loss of their batta. Away at his home came the news of the outbreak at Meerut, and then gradually news of its spreading. Seetaram, from his well-known sympathy with the English, came in for suspicion and ill-treatment. A party of sepoy's passing through his village carried him a prisoner to Lucknow, and here he relates that though there were two *subahdars*, a sepoy had command of the party—the assertion of the will of the strong men, as it were, over the mere seniority-derived rank of the native officers. Before they got to Lucknow they were attacked by some *sahibs* acting as troopers, and Seetaram, who, luckily for him, was in chains, was rescued from the mutineers, and appointed also a trooper among these European volunteer cavalymen. After some service as such, he was, through the good offices of the commanding officer of this cavalry troop, made an extra *jemadar* in a Punjabi regiment. Never, says Seetaram, did he see the sepoy's

put up a good fight against the British, though he adds that it seems to have been different at Delhi.

Here comes the crowning tragedy of the old man's life. In one of the enclosures round Lucknow many mutineers had been captured. Seetaram's regiment was on duty, as carrying out executions, and Seetaram himself was in command of the firing-party. He was asking the names of the condemned men, when one gave the number of the regiment of the son that he had not seen for many years. The old man asked after his son, Anunteeram, of the Light Company. The wretched man said, "I am Anunteeram, from Tillowee, the son of Seetaram Jemadar." He fell at his father's feet, and the father rushed to the major to ask to be relieved of command of the firing-party. The officer refused at first, but when he heard that it was the man's own son that he was called on to execute, he sent for the prisoner to question him, and relieved the father of the duty. The old man never thought even of begging for the lad's life—that was too doubly forfeit; and he went to his tent amid the jeers of the Sikhs of the corps. He was allowed to perform the last rites over his son's body, the only corpse to which such was permitted. Seetaram relates that the major was much blamed by his brother officers for allowing even this kindness to a mutineer's father, for feelings were running more than high, and the war was *à l'outrance*, since there is nothing so bitter as authority flouted, especially with all the concomitants of that terrible rising.

At the end of the campaign in the Terai, Seetaram at sixty-five years of age is promoted *subahdar*, and here we come across the first subject for complaint in all that patient life. Too old to double and do light infantry drill, he complains that he was shouted at by the adjutant, and the commanding officer called him every sort of name, and forcibly invalidated him from the service, as unfit for more work. It was no doubt high time, but possibly in the weariness of the reconstruction, and the rebuilding of a new army on the amazing ashes of the old, Seetaram did not get the consideration that his age and services merited.

The old man then moralises on the heart-breaking system of the Company, when men came to rank at an age when they were past justifying it, and speaks of the way in which the irregular corps, when the officers arrived at the rank of *subahdar* while in their prime, kept their men in order; but he laments the end of the Company's rule, and thought its successor far more harsh and uncompromising. Seetaram mourns, too, the new type of officer, out of sympathy with the men, but that was a transition stage, and has long ago changed for the better. But it is an old, old cry, that the new *sahibs* are not like the old *sahibs*!

Seetaram concludes the quaint and natural description of his life with some few remarks on the causes of the Mutiny, confirming those generally accepted, and with some reviling of the Mussulmans of India as the instigators of all trouble and the ruin of all moral codes and worth since their arrival in India. He then concludes with an acknowledgment of the peace and position his pension has conferred on him at the end of a long and hard life, and with an appeal to the officer at whose request he had written his memoirs, never to forget that he had always been wholeheartedly devoted to the British cause. It is all refreshing reading, partly because of naïve criticism, partly because of his recognition of the good intention of the Sirkar, be it never so unintelligible. It is perhaps most pleasing for its evidence of the obvious enthusiasm that the British officers of the best type had inspired in this man of ancient warrior race. It throws light on the simple character in many ways of the old Bengal sepoy and his successors, who in patience and courage have carried the eagles, come rain come shine, from the Mediterranean to the Great Wall of China, and from the deserts of Egypt to the snows of the Hindu Kush and the swamps of Burma. It enables us to get a glimpse of that devotion which the British officer has been able to attract, and which has something more at its fount than the mark on an attestation paper. It also enables us to see where half a century ago the shoe was pinching, and where to this

day it is apt to pinch again. The book is full of information for the sepoy officer to-day, and it is because Lord Kitchener listened to those who brought it to his notice that it became a textbook for the compulsory language tests in Hindustani that officers of the Indian Army must pass. It is good reading, in that it carries the reader through half a century of Indian history, and the vicissitudes that a soldier of the great British Empire, white, black, or brown, is ever liable to undergo, and the chances that are so well summed up in the old chant of the sepoy already quoted, *Khubi sukh, khubi dukh, Angrez ka naukhar*, which may be interpreted—

“ Sometimes pleasure, sometimes pain,  
The servant of the English.”

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